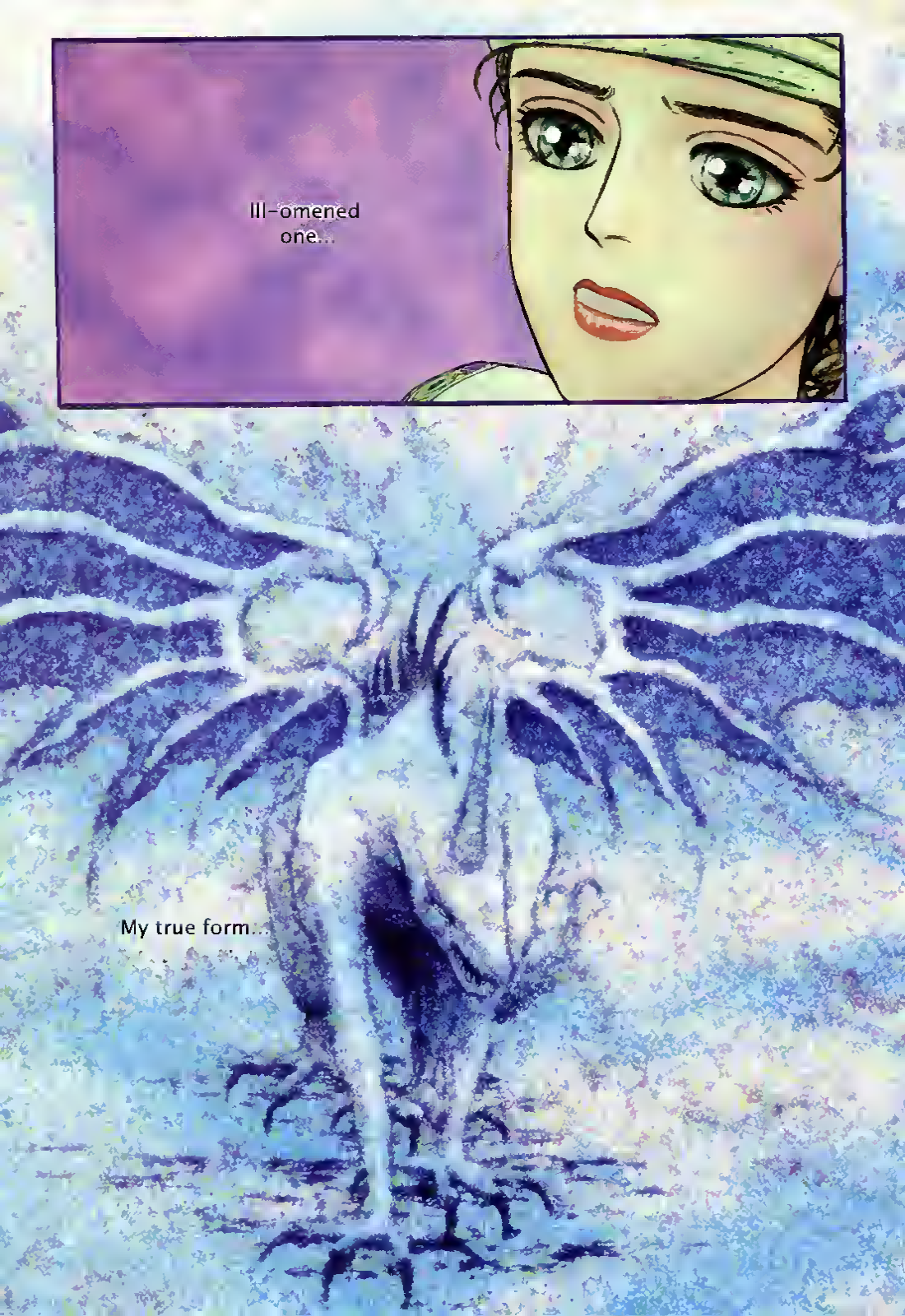
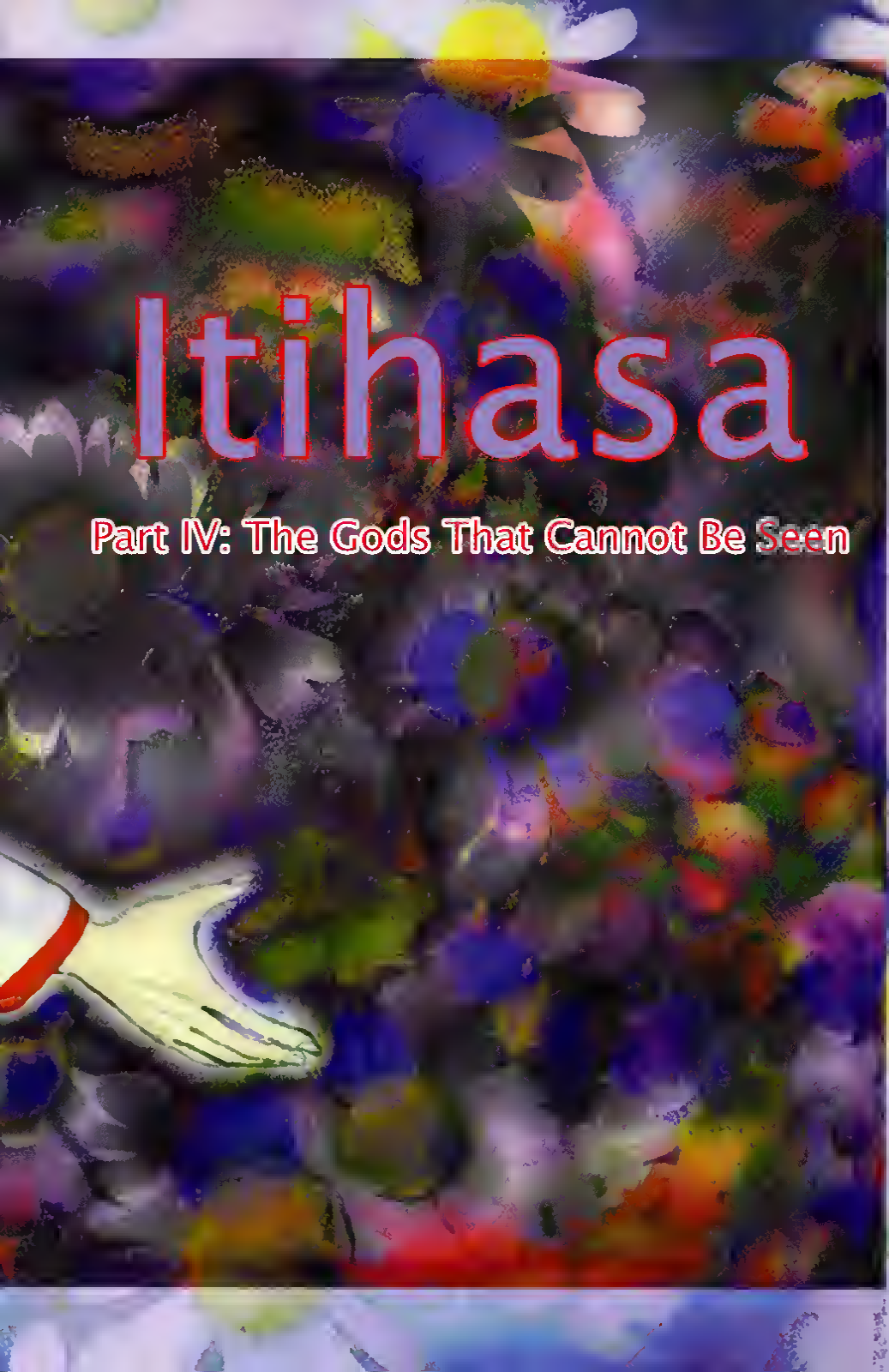
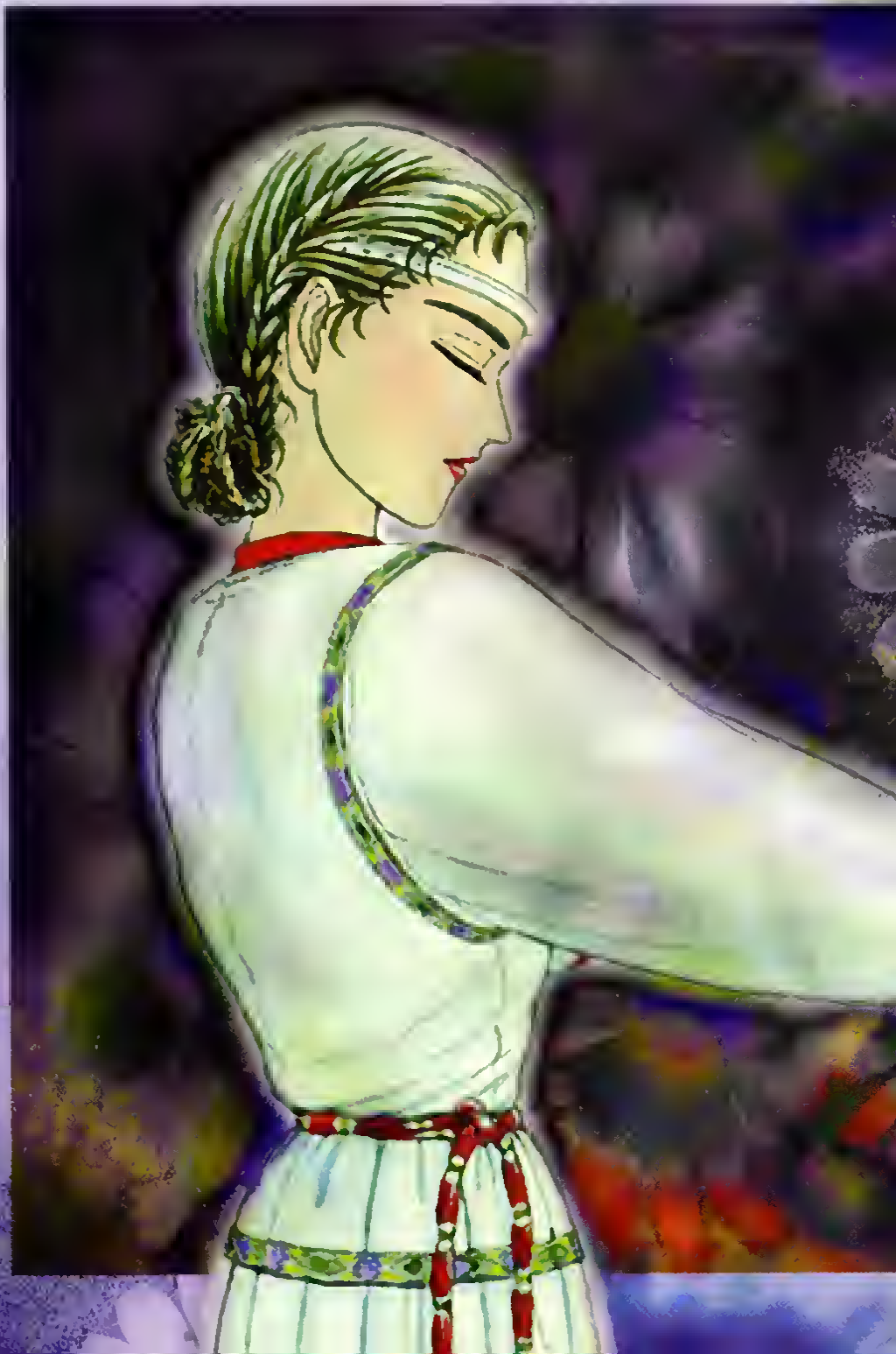
Itihasa 13

Wakako Mizuki


Ill-omened one...
My true form...


Itihasa
Part IV: The Gods That Cannot Be Seen



Recap & Main Characters

<Part I>

Long, long ago... The gods that can be seen—divided into the warring demigods and demon gods—have traveled to this once-peaceful land, and the kind-hearted tribes who worship the gods that cannot be seen have become embroiled in their war. Toko's tribe is attacked by the Kiyu Faction, a group of demon gods under Kiyu the Silver Horned God.

Takaya, Toko and Aohiko, who were in the mountains looking for yang stones and escaped the attack, meet the demigod Risson, God of the True Law, and his warriors (including Katsura and Ichirota). The three decide to join the group in its pursuit of the demon gods.

One day, Takaya is badly injured and near death. To save him, Toko chants a mantra that transfers her own lifeforce to him. As a result, Toko herself is left in serious condition. As she hovers between life and death, another Toko (!?) appears and guides her towards life. Her other self tells her that they are fated to kill each other when they meet again...

Katsura falls in love with Aohiko. However, conscious of the dark fate that will swallow him up, Aohiko is unable to accept her feelings. On learning this, Katsura privately vows to hide her feelings and protect Aohiko for as long as she lives.

One day, seven years later, Toko learns she was born a twin. As a child, her twin was kidnapped and has become one of Kiyu's warriors... Takaya is kind as ever to Toko in her state of shock, unaware that Toko has come to love him as more than just a brother.

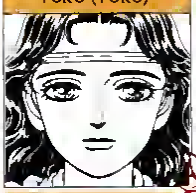
<Part II>

Takaya and Toko are surrounded by the demon god's warriors, and Toko comes face to face with her twin, Yoko. In agony over both their separate lives, Toko is run through by a crazed Yoko's spear, but Toko's soul enters Yoko, and Yoko becomes convinced that she is Toko.

Meanwhile, Aohiko engages Kiyu's army all by himself and is taken captive.

Then wings abruptly grow from Takaya's back.

Toko (Yoko)



Like Kai, Takaya has Mamana blood in his veins.

Because Toko has borrowed Yoko's body, and Yoko has been fitted with a demon headband, Toko is compelled to kill people. Then Yachio appears to Toko. Yachio is the one who knows the divine names of all the gods. Yachio tells Toko to go to Fuji. However, her shock is so great that she falls into a deep sleep.

Borrowing Aohiko's power, Toko releases her own life, choosing to live as both Toko and Yoko.

Meanwhile, in order to save Toko and Aohiko, Takaya, who has been entrusted with Risson's divine name, sets off for Shangri-La at Fuji with Katsura.

Takaya

<Part III>

Takaya, Katsura and Kai are traveling to Fuji on foot.

In a village along the way, they meet Tamia, a girl with Mamana blood, and her father, Hakuji. This strengthens their thoughts for the as-yet-unseen land of Fuji and for Amane, the God of Universal Good.

One day, Takaya saves the demigod Kaguya, who was about to be erased by Yachio. At the same time, Aohiko temporarily loses his mind under the moon and realizes that his doom is drawing nearer. Takaya decides to leave Katsura, Kai and Tamia and press on towards Fuji with Kaguya.

Takaya has finally reached the forest of illusory mists that spreads over the plains below Fuji. He parts with Kaguya and enters the forest alone. There, Amane's servant Kusuto awakens, manipulates an illusion of Toko and turns its sword on Takaya.

<Part IV>

Scales have spread over Tamia's arm. Hakuji and the others leave the village, hurrying toward Amane.

Ichirota

Katsura

Aohiko

While camping on the shore, Katsura and her group are surrounded by demon god warriors. She is miraculously reunited with Aohiko and the others, who happened to be passing by, but then a tsunami swallows her up.

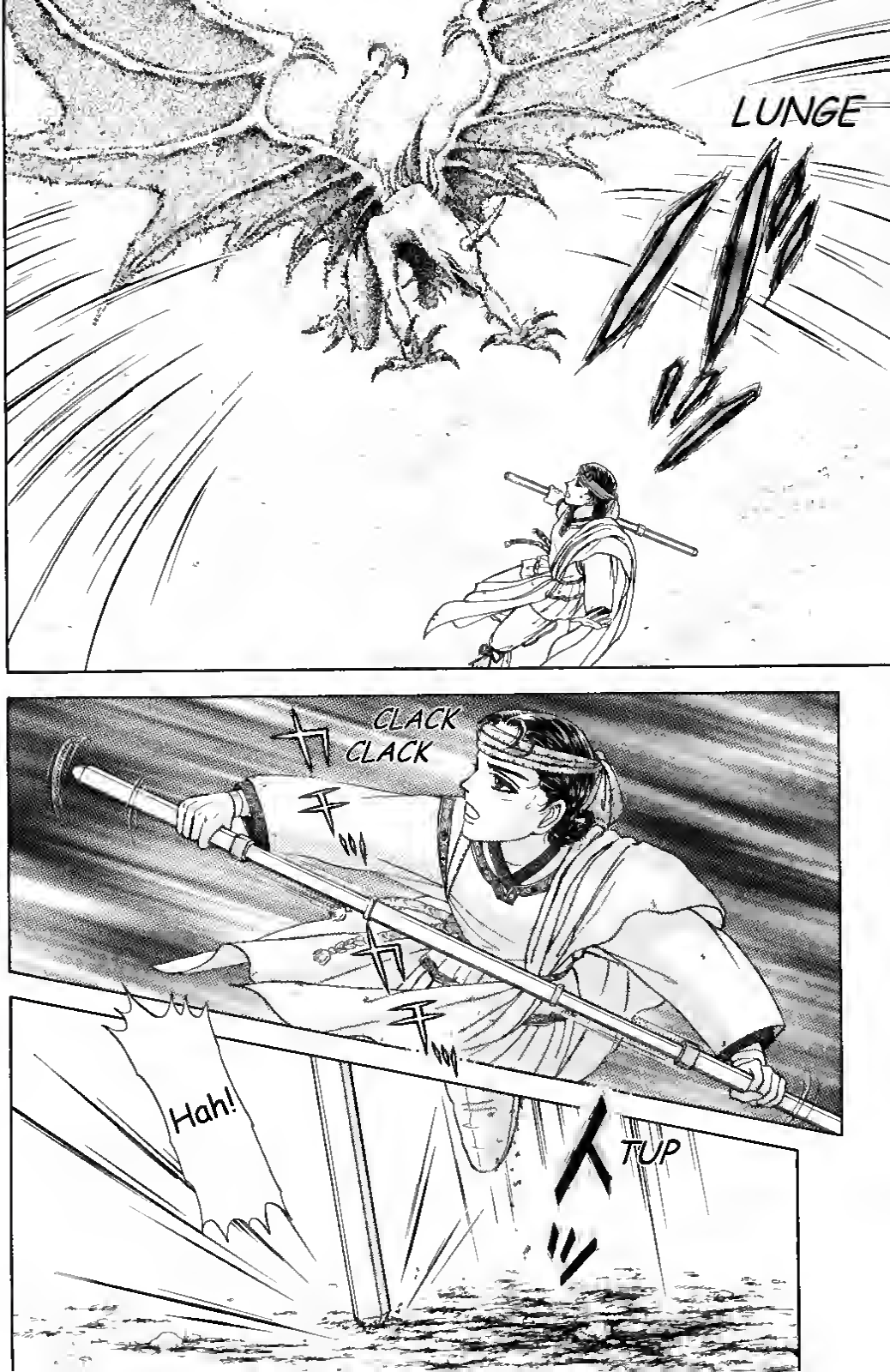
Katsura survives, but Takaya, having reached Fuji, kills again and again to protect the peace of the village. He is unable to completely rid himself of his hesitation, but Kusuto plants a suggestion and converts him to Amane. However, his heart only grows more wild.

Meanwhile, Kiyu has ordered Toko to investigate Fuji. Although hesitant, Toko makes up her mind. Then, in the forest of illusory mists, she meets Takaya!

Mantra: a mysterious spell received from the gods that cannot be seen.

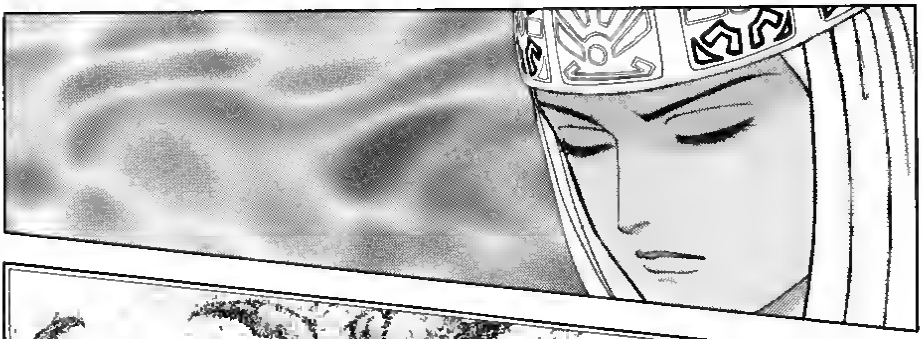
"Yin stone: a special stone that has negative energy. Its power is manifested through the use of mantras.
Demon headband: a headband Kiyu sets on the foreheads of his demon-god warriors. When these warriors are wounded, they go berserk."

HISSSSSS
Takaya is here!
Whoever is controlling this illusion knows Takaya!


LUNGE
CLACK
CLACK
Hah!
TUP

Take me to Takaya!
WHIRR
Just let me see him!
I don't mind if you kill me after that!
That's the only reason I came to Fuji!
I'm here to see Takaya!

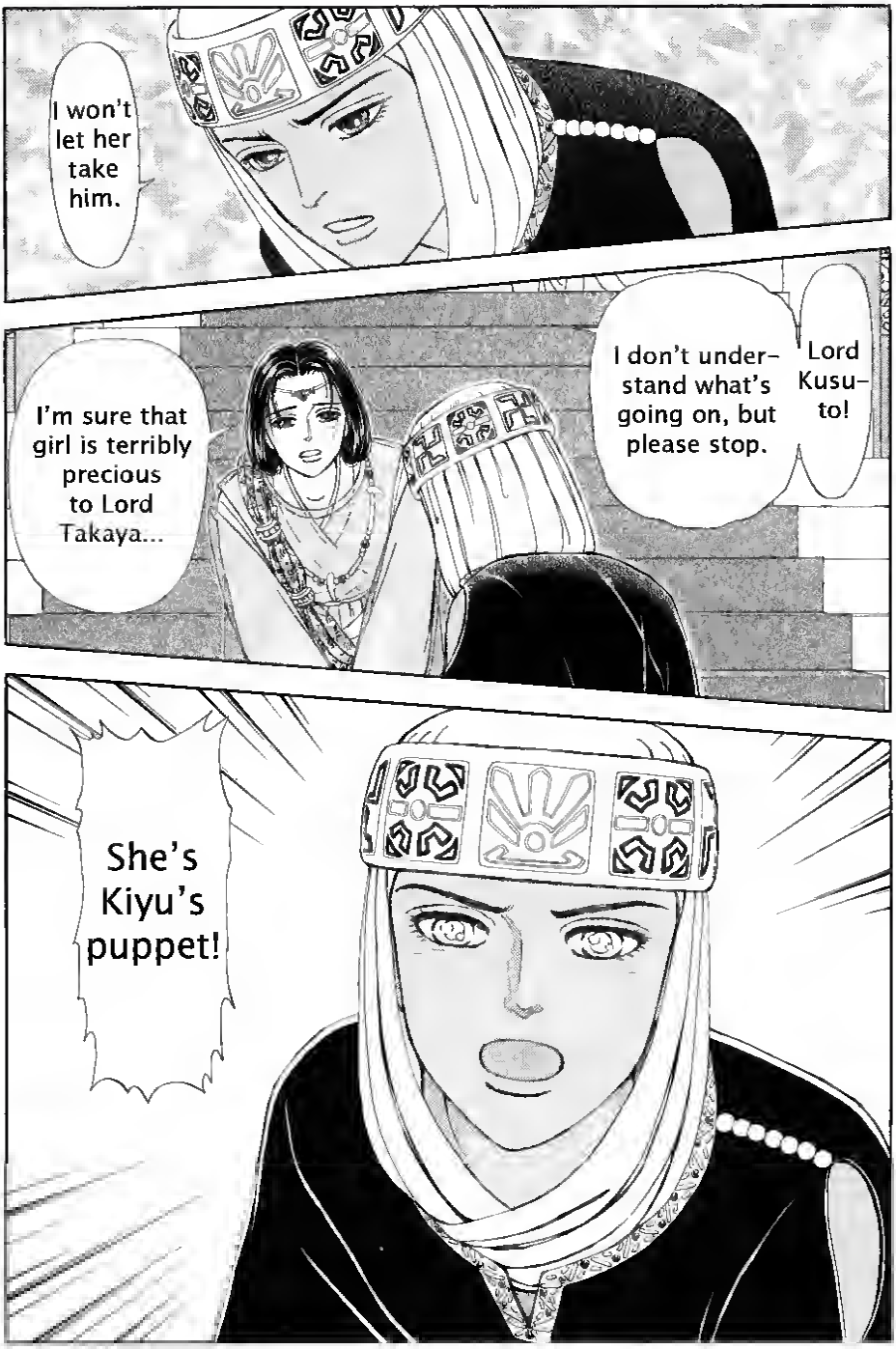
She's just an unfortu-nate girl.
Kusuto ...

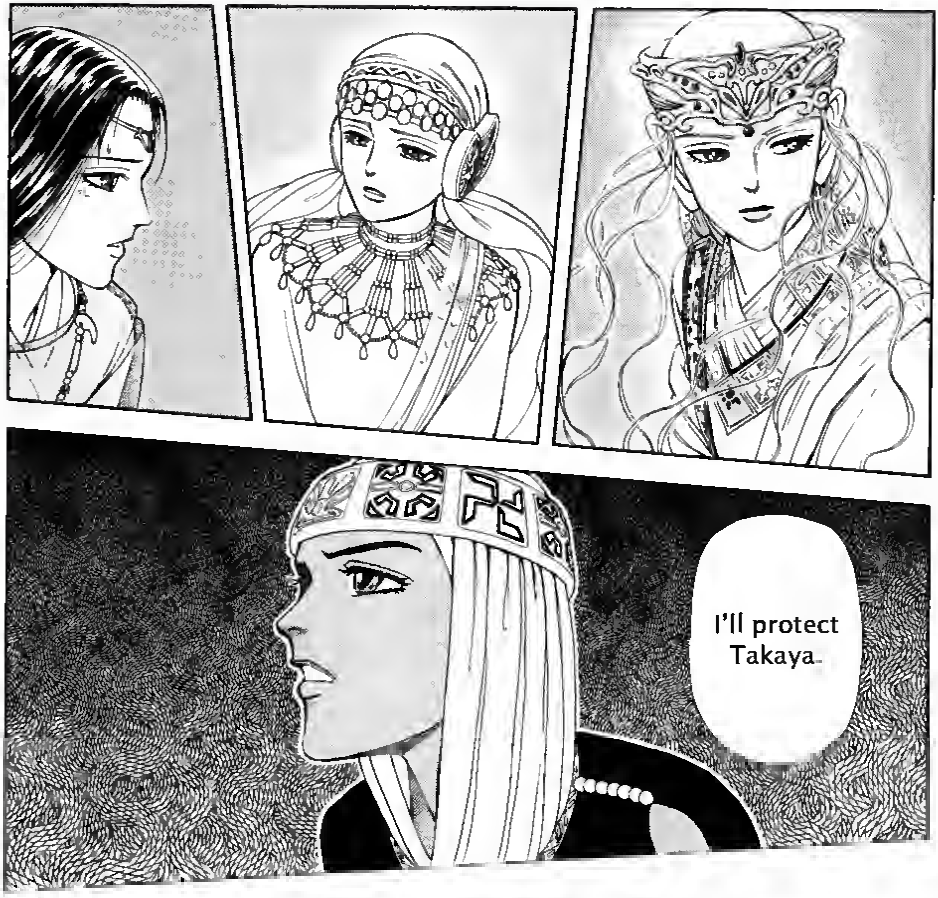


Ugkh!

SKASH

...is no mere girl.
That...
Lord Kusu-to!
Ooh!
Taka-ya is...


I won't let her take him.
Lord Kusu-to!
I don't under-stand what's going on, but please stop.
I'm sure that girl is terribly precious to Lord Takaya...
She's Kiyu's puppet!


I'll protect Takaya.

Are you bound for the village of Fuji?
Is this another illusion...?

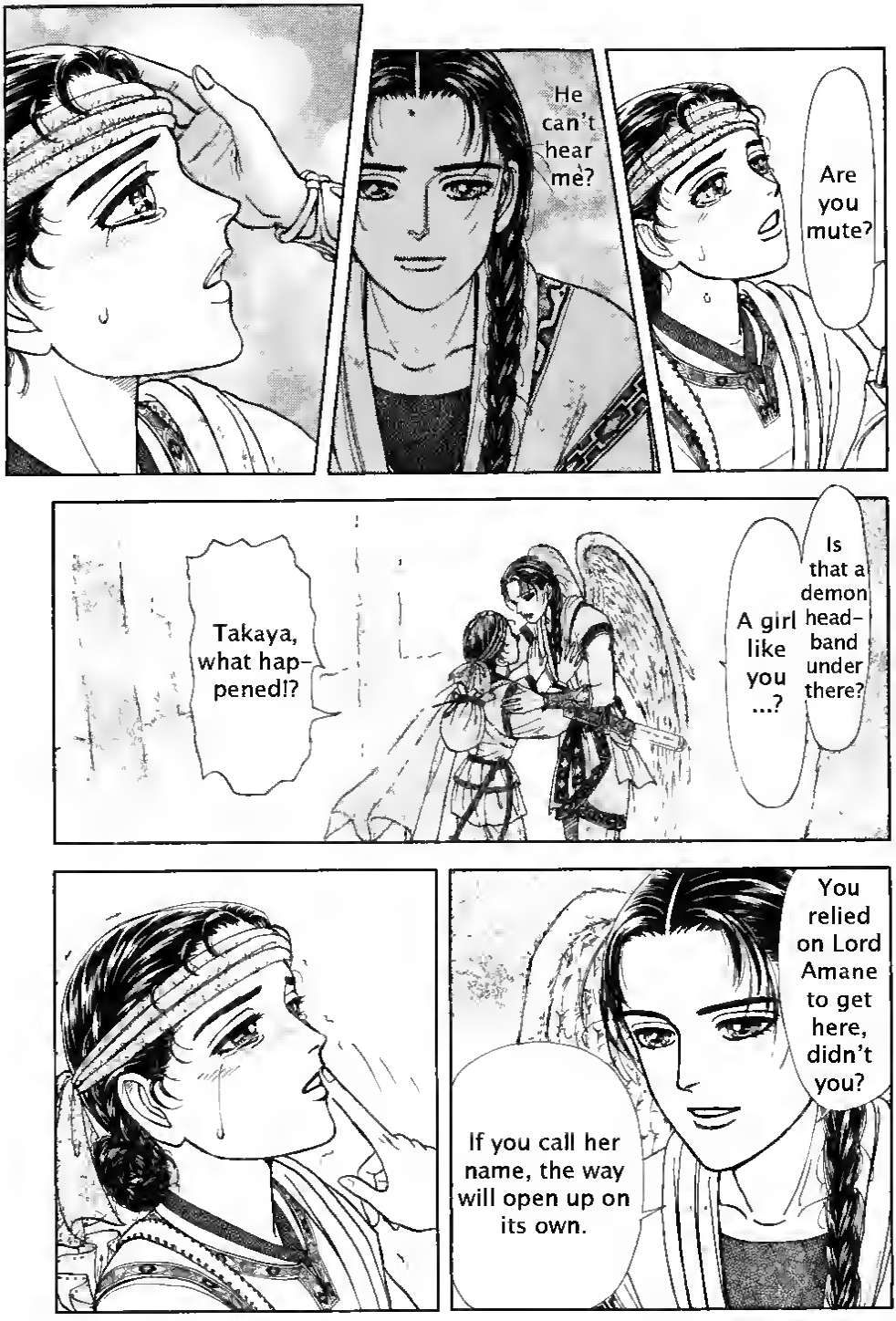
I heard the sound of combat ...
Are you all right?
I am Takaya, yes...
Taka... ya?
Takaya...?
You came this far alone?

It's me! Toko!
Taka-ya...?
What did you say?
I couldn't hear.

I can't see your face well, either. Maybe it's the mist...
The mist still tricks me, too, if I'm not careful.
An illu-sion?
What's wrong? What are you saying?
Don't go!
It's me! It's Toko!
Can't you hear me!?

Takaya!
Taka-
ya!
Taka-
ya!

Taka-
ya...
I'm
sorry
...
I guess I'm
a bit tired.
You were
right
there, but
I didn't
see you.
It's me!
Toko!
Don't
you
know
me!?


He can't hear me?
Are you mute?
Takaya, what happened!?
A girl like you ...?
Is that a demon head-band under there?
You relied on Lord Amane to get here, didn't you?
If you call her name, the way will open up on its own.

All you have to do is entrust everything to Lord Amane and imagine her name.
Don't worry.
Just call in your heart.

Taka-ya!
No!
No!
No!

We'll meet again in the vil-lage.
Taka-ya...

You have to get through this on your own.

I know it's been rough, but...
You're almost there.
Ta... kaya ...
Do your best!

Ah...
Ah...
ah...
Aa
aa
aa
aa
aa
ah!

I think I can hear her crying from here...
Lord Kusu-to...
Now, when she's shattered by despair, I can learn about Kiyu from her.
...we can capture Toko.
Now ...

I'll awaken the demigods from the cavern of sacred sleep and send them to Toko.
...To protect her. Not to capture her.
Lord Amane!
That demon really was the embodiment of the one that dwells in Toko's heart.
Kusuto merely took what lurked there and gave it shape.
If she is to live here, at Fuji...

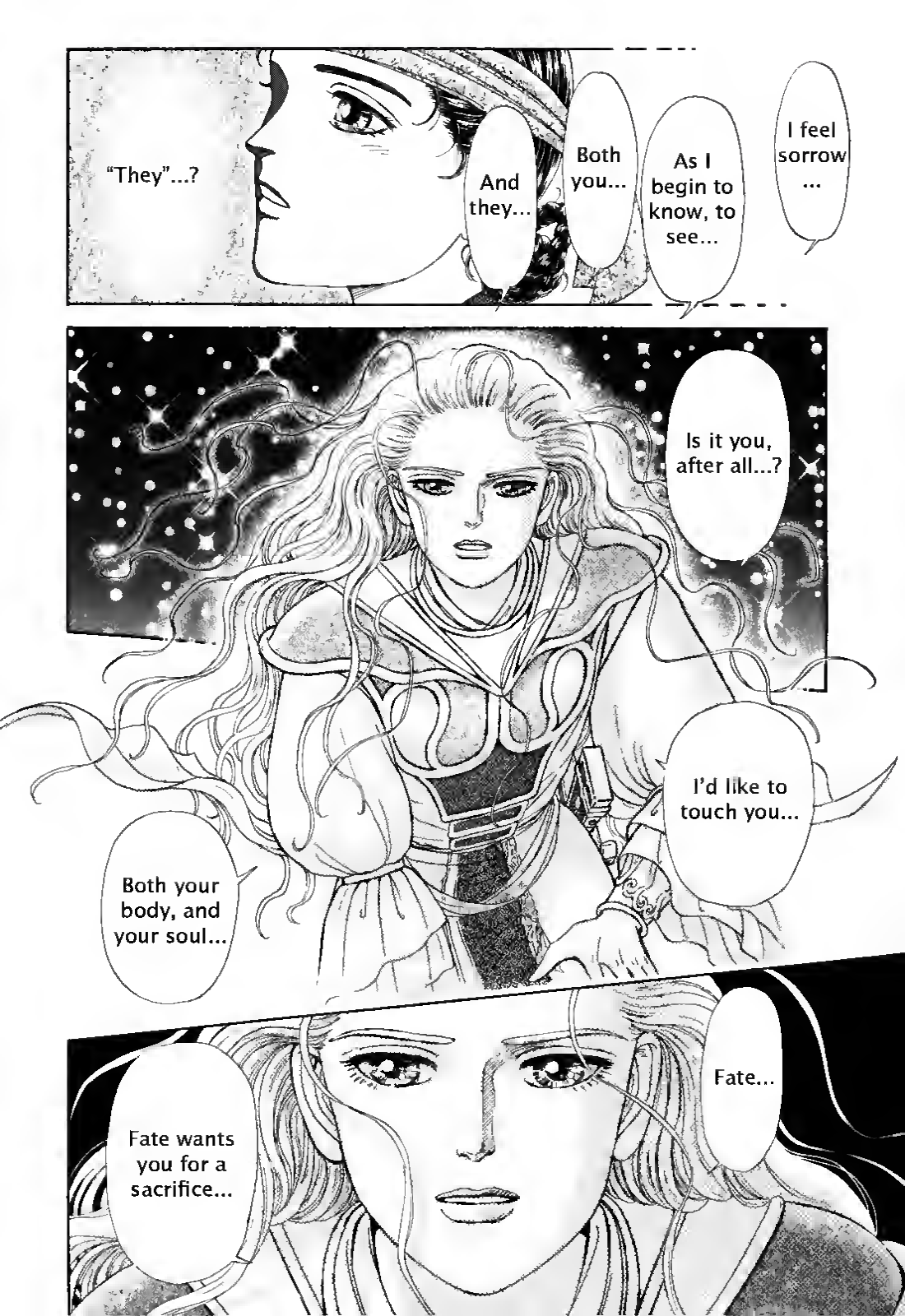
All the more so if she was Kiyu's warrior...
She will need to forget her time as a demon warrior, like the others, and begin again with a child's heart.
I am here to make all people equally happy.
Those who let demons live in their hearts can never be happy.
We should seal her into a cavern for a while and watch...
I really can't agree to allowing Toko into the village.
GASP

Toko's aura just...
...vanished?

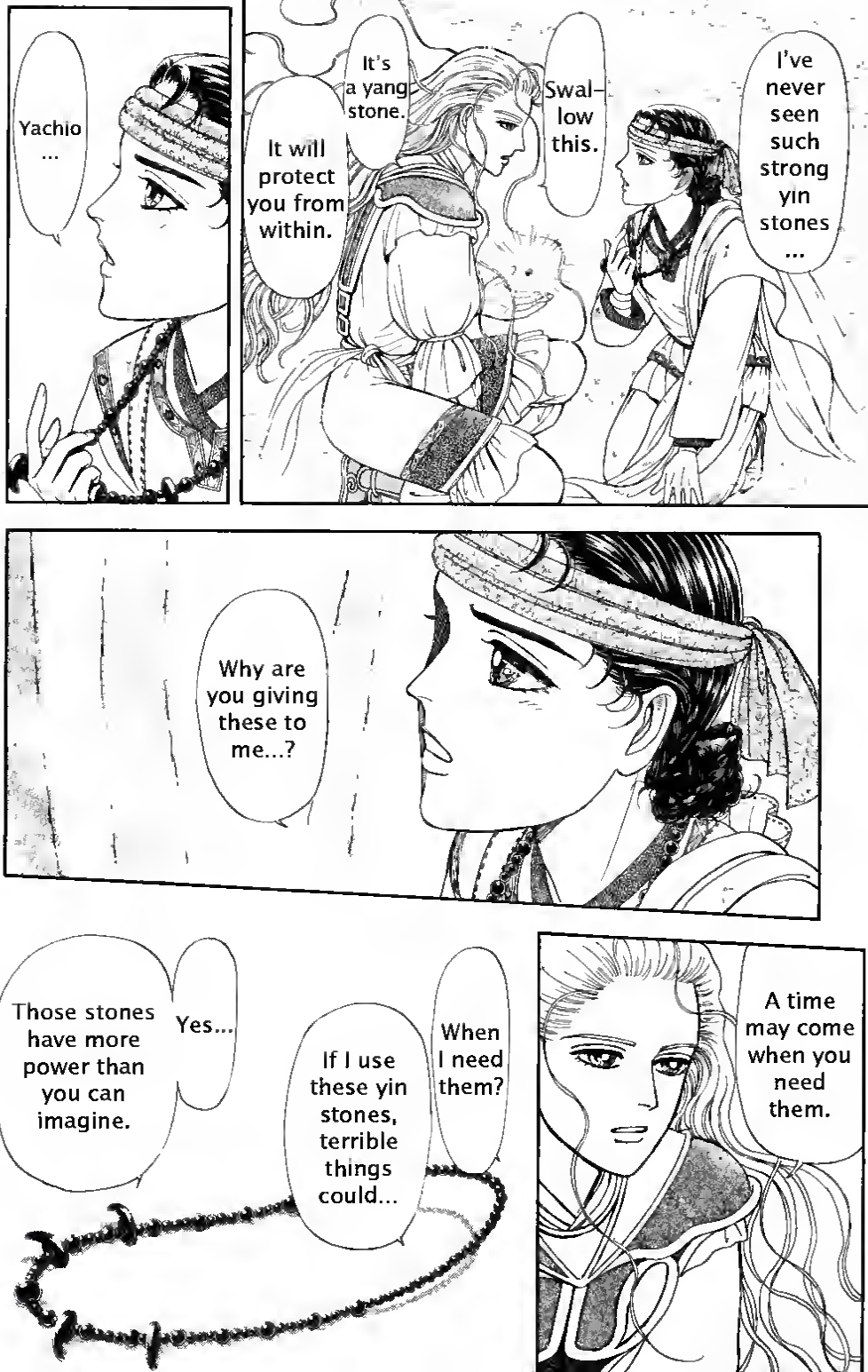
I didn't call you!
Who needs you!?
Toko ...
I wasn't calling anybody!

Leave me alone!
Stay back!
I still don't understand the act of crying...
I'm imper-fect.
I'm sorry ...

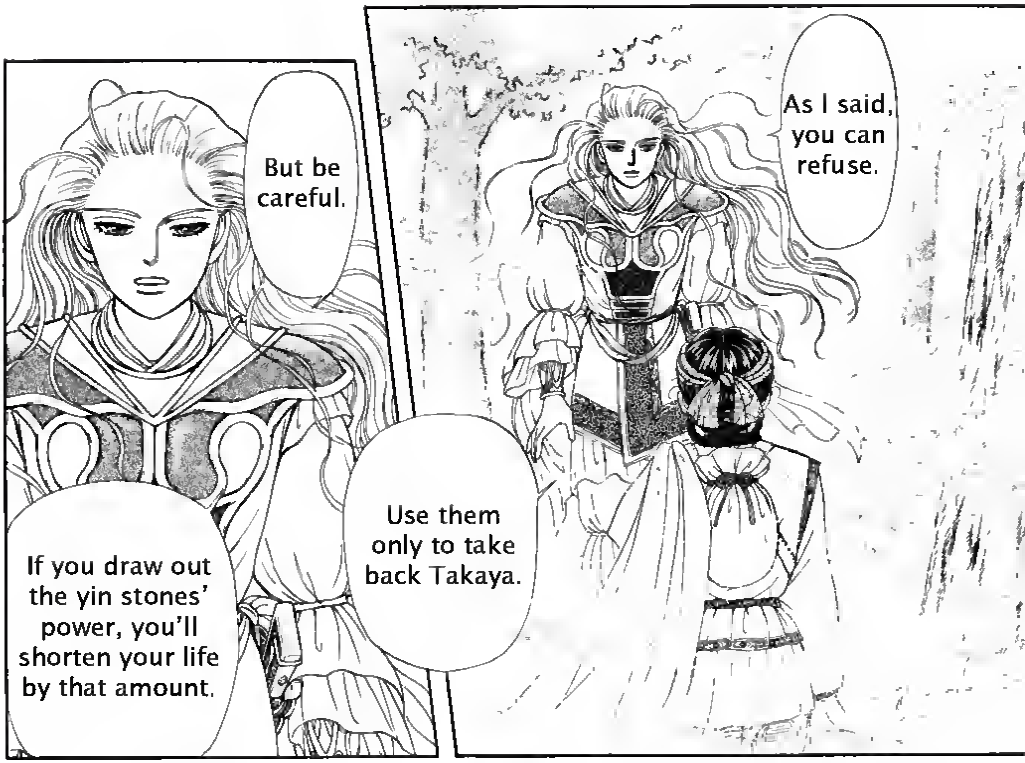
One who can only wait for now.
Who ...
...are you, really ...?
You'll cry soon...
Your heart is full of sorrow.
It has been for ages...


"They"...?
And they...
Both you...
As I begin to know, to see...
I feel sorrow ...
Is it you, after all...?
I'd like to touch you...
Both your body, and your soul...
Fate...
Fate wants you for a sacrifice...

Here ...
In fact, refusing would be...
You can refu-se.
What are you saying?
What?
Yin stones.
What's this?
However, it will steal your life-force as well.
It will erase your aura.


Yachio ...
It will protect you from within.
It's a yang stone.
Swallow this.
I've never seen such strong yin stones ...
Why are you giving these to me...?
Those stones have more power than you can imagine.
Yes...
If I use these yin stones, terrible things could...
When I need them?
A time may come when you need them.

I won't do anything!
I don't want to!
...What are you...
...trying to make me do?
I just... Takaya...
Takaya...
I just want to be with him!


But be careful.
If you draw out the yin stones' power, you'll shorten your life by that amount.
Use them only to take back Takaya.
As I said, you can refuse.

Yachio ...!
The time is at hand ...

If...
If we meet once more, come to Towada...
Come with me to Towa-da...

GULP
ゴクッ
COUGH

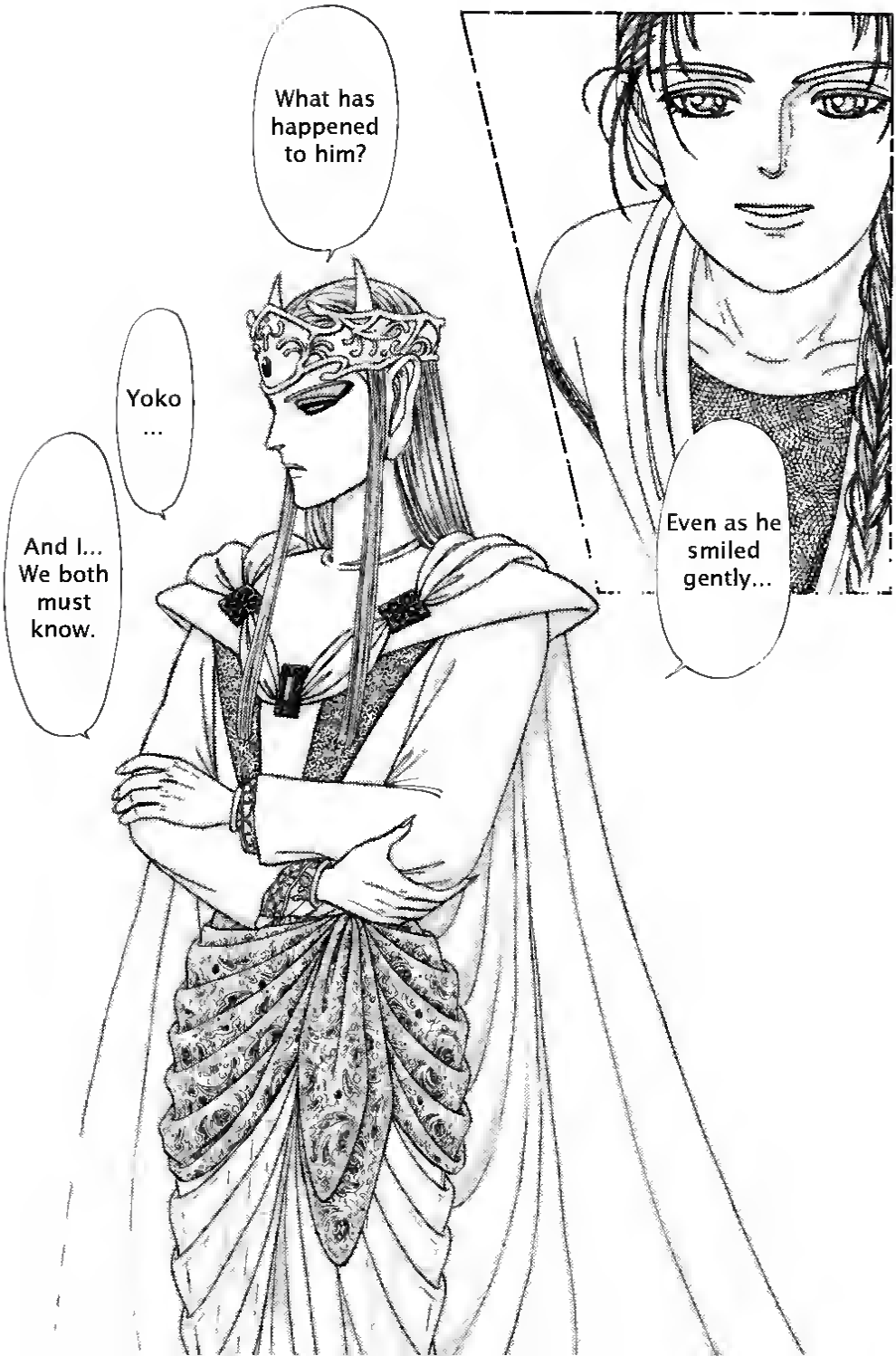
To be honest, I was happy.
I wanted someone, anyone, to call me...
I'm sorry...
To say my name... "Toko"...
"I know it's been rough, but..."
"You're almost there."

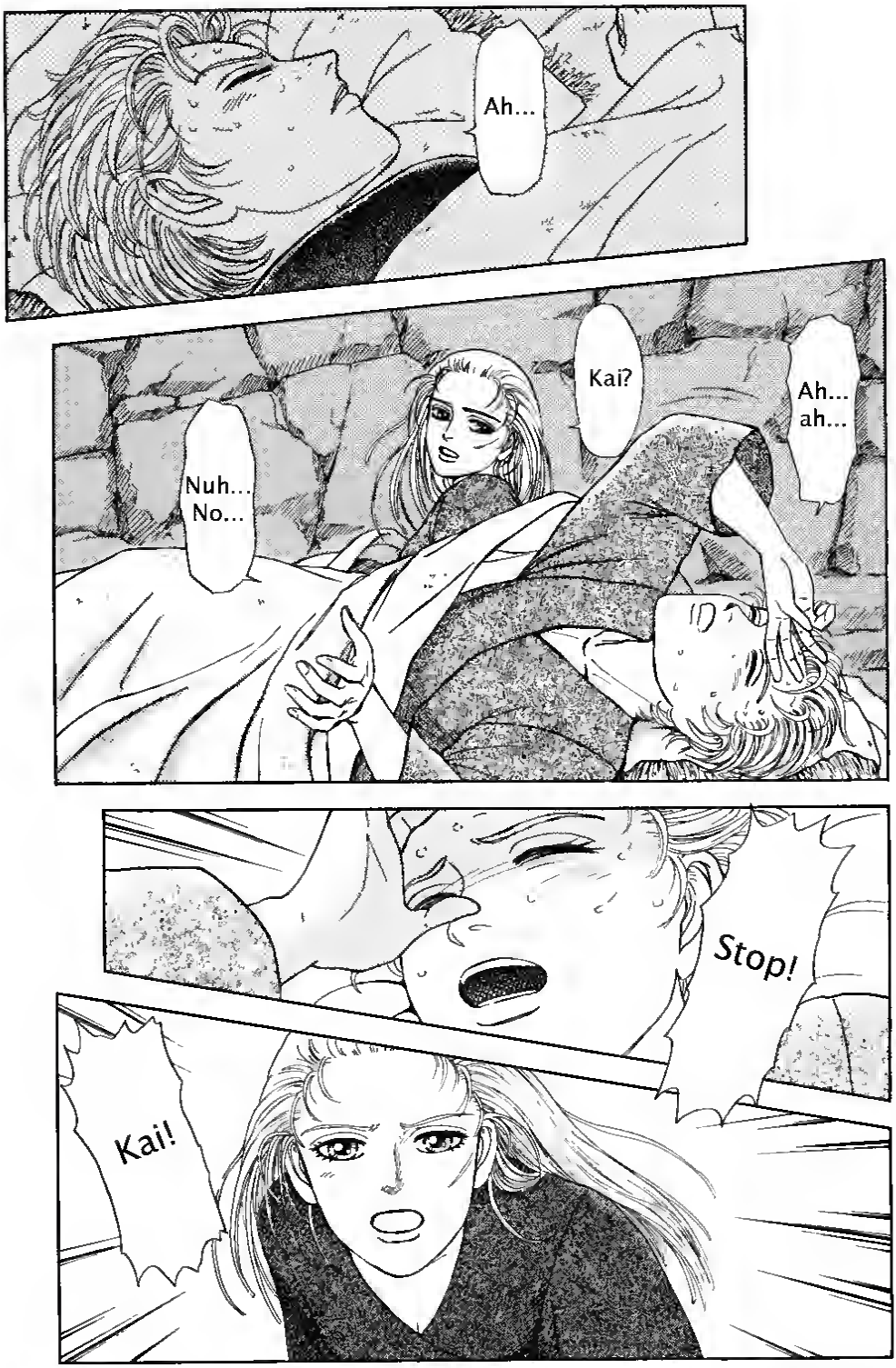
Takaya, you liar.
I'm nowhere near "there" yet.
"Do your best!"
I'll... do my best!

The sacred mirror? Juo did...?
In hindsight, he may have approached us for that very reason...
I'm terribly sorry. He started a fight, then made off with it during the confusion.
The sacred mirror holds meaning only when intact.
How foolish ...

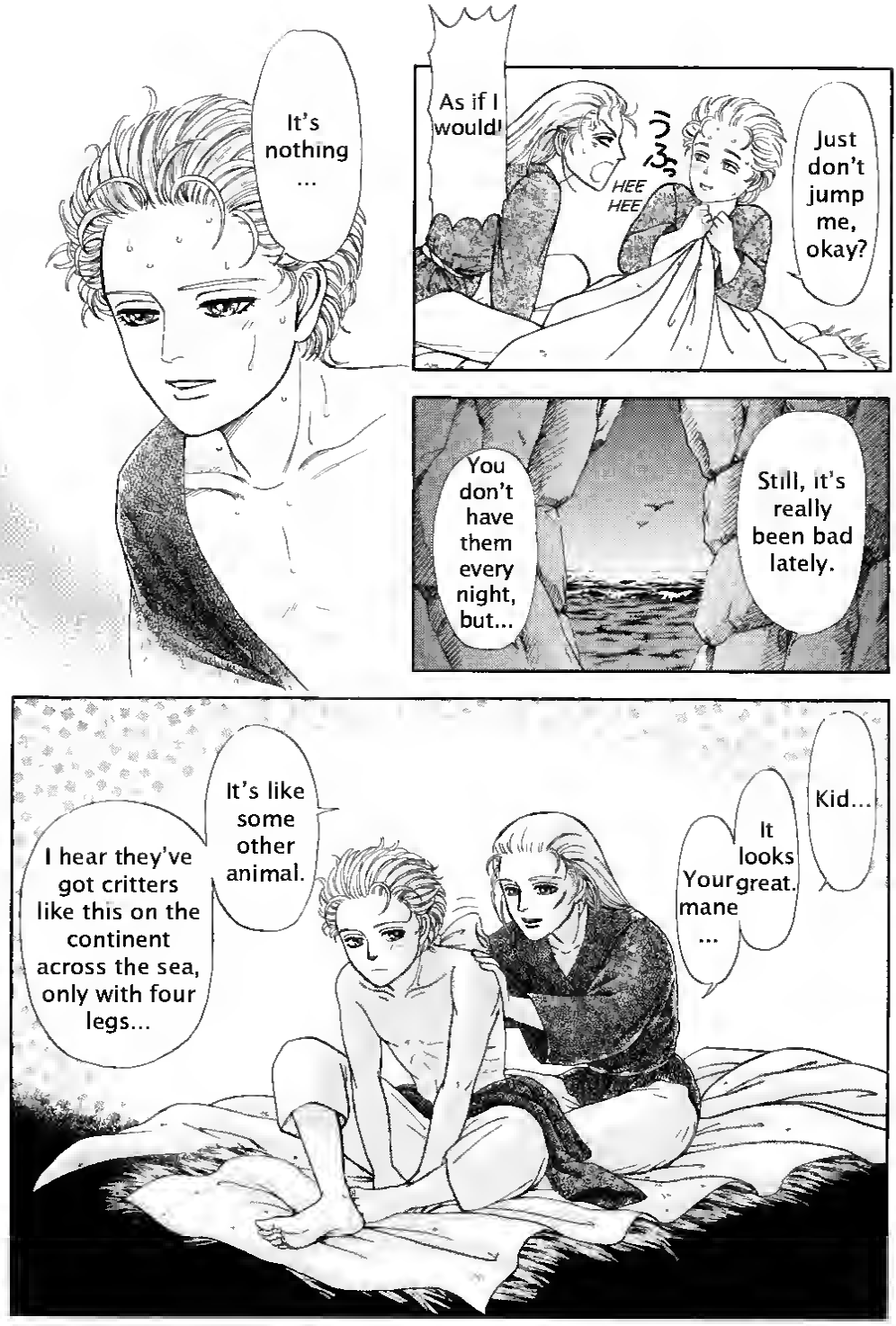
I'm afraid ...
...we haven't found them... nor the sacred mirror that we believe sank into the ocean.
What of Katsura and Kai's corpses?
I've sent pursu-ers after him, but...
Lord Kiyu ...?
If we say a demon god who stole a sacred mirror from me seems to be hiding on the coast...
If we let rumors of Juo travel to Fuji...

We may...
...be able to lure out Takaya...
Taka-ya...?
Takaya does not remem-ber Yoko.
That's ...
Then they did meet...
Briefly, in the forest of illusory mists...
Howe-ver...
He treated Yoko, or Toko, as a stranger...

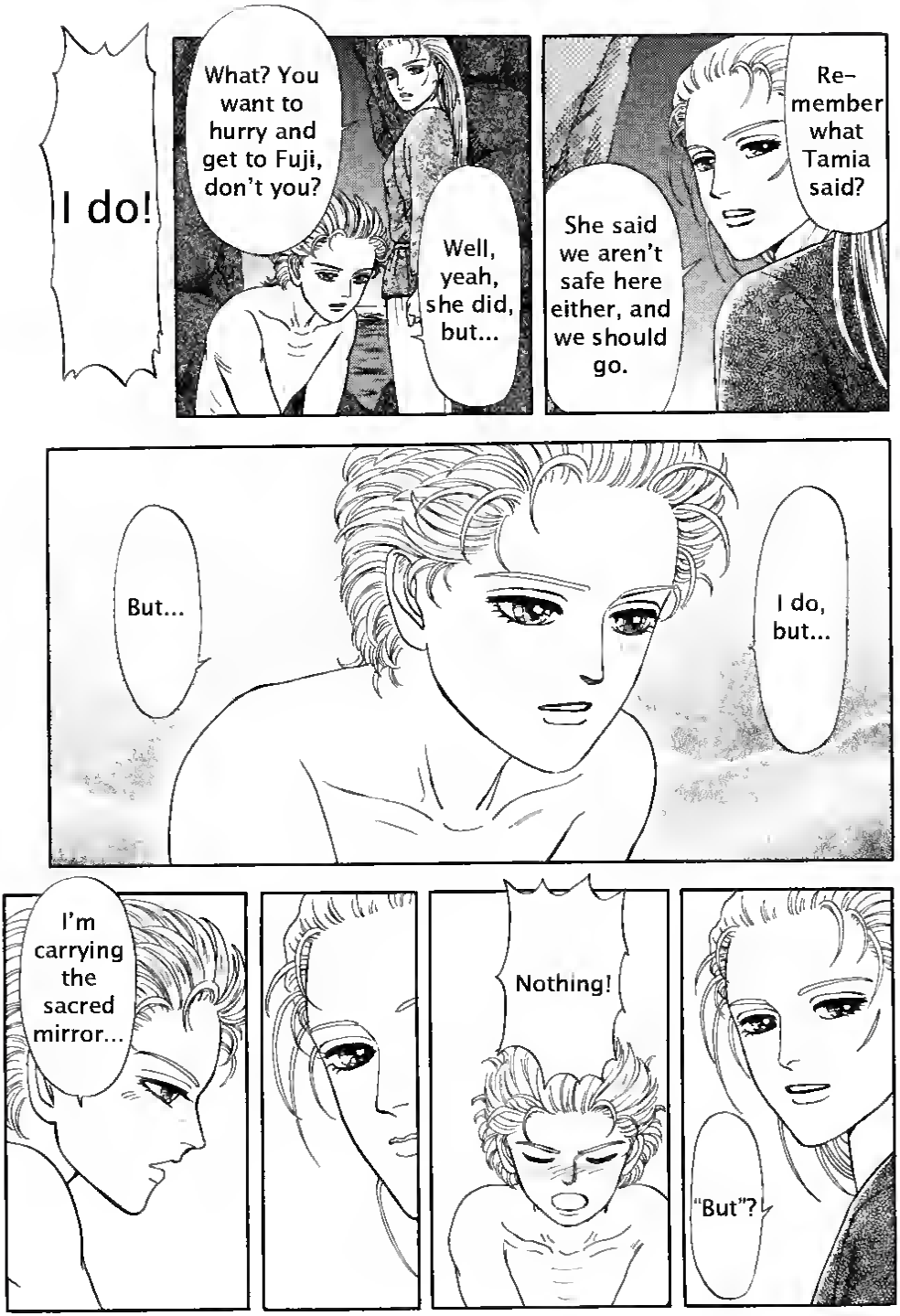

What has happened to him?
Yoko ...
And I... We both must know.
Even as he smiled gently...

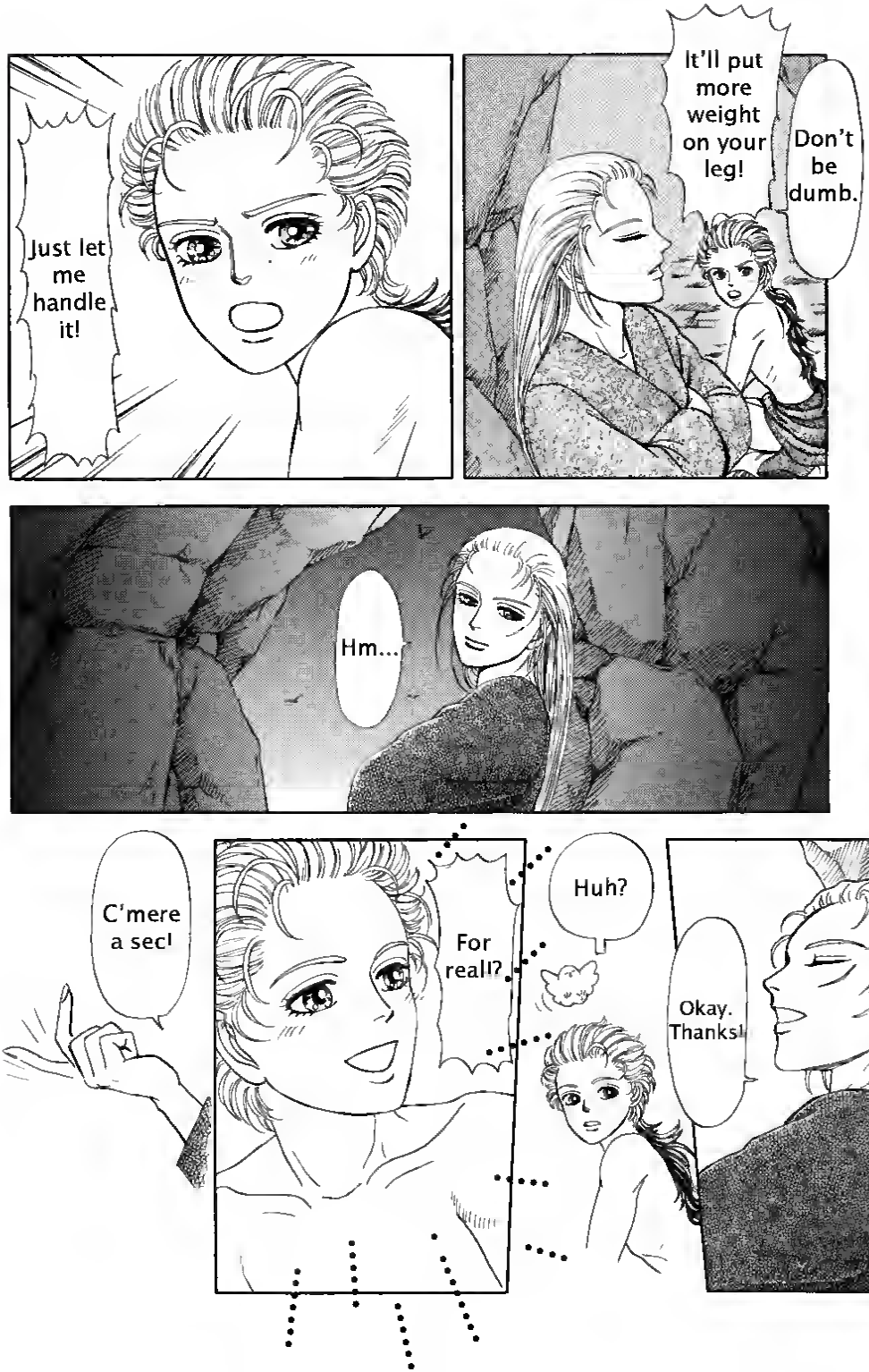

Ah...
Kai?
Ah... ah...
Nuh... No...
Stop!
Kai!

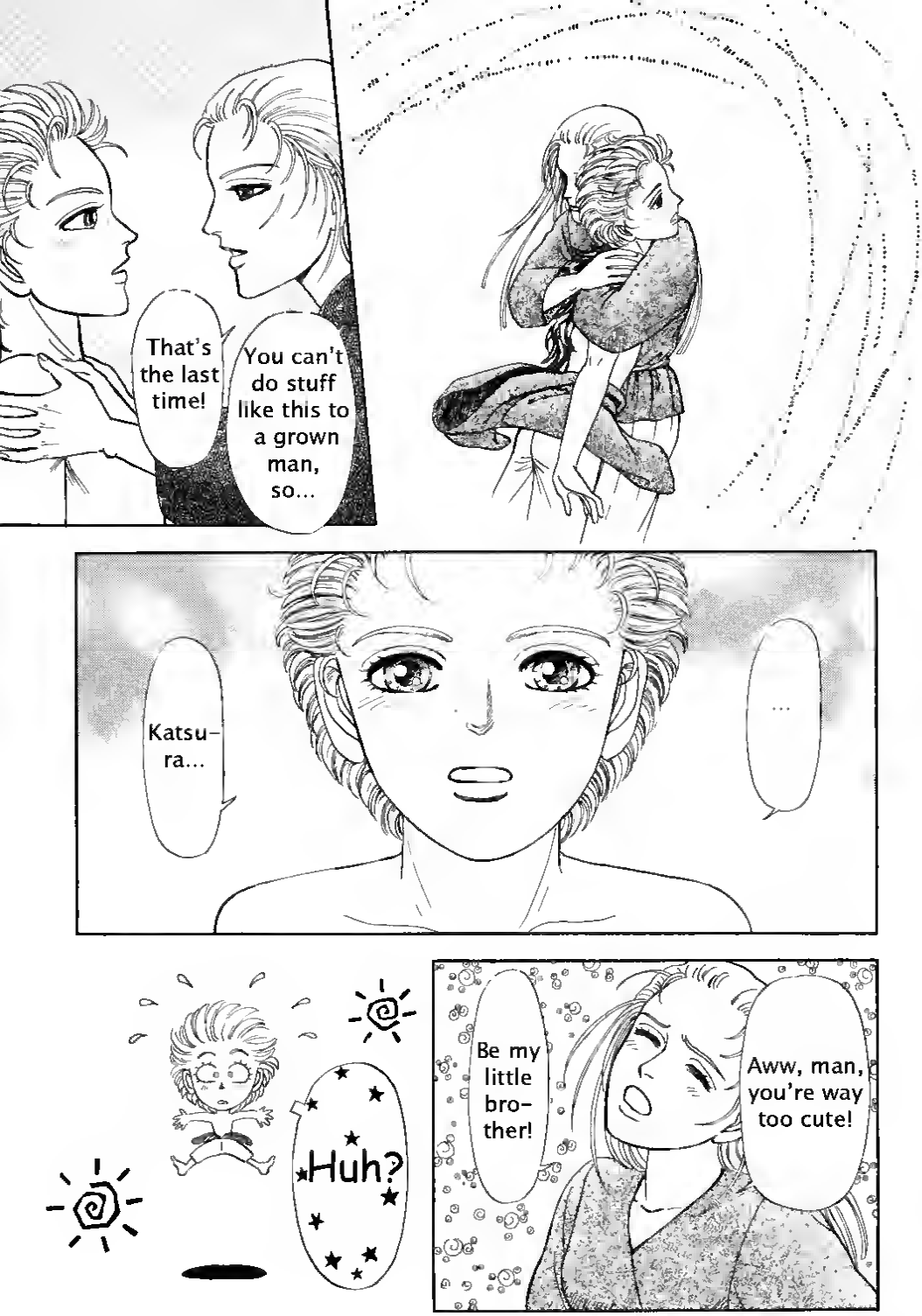
Bad dreams again?
Oh ...
They're just dreams. Don't wake me up every time.
Heh heh ...
STRIP!
I'm fine. Leave me alone.
We should rub you down. You'll catch a cold if you stay sweaty like that.


It's nothing ...
As if I would!
HEE HEE
Just don't jump me, okay?
You don't have them every night, but...
Still, it's really been bad lately.
Kid...
It looks great.
Your mane ...
It's like some other animal.
I hear they've got critters like this on the continent across the sea, only with four legs...

I've got a feeling that this mane's gonna change me.
Then I'll get way, way stronger and fight beside Takaya!
GWEH!
Dry your front yourself!
Yeah, yeah!
It'll heal faster on the move!
You're sure that leg's okay?
Let's get ready to leave!
It's almost dawn


I do!
What? You want to hurry and get to Fuji, don't you?
Well, yeah, she did, but...
She said we aren't safe here either, and we should go.
Remember what Tamia said?
But...
I do, but...
I'm carrying the sacred mirror...
Nothing!
"But"?

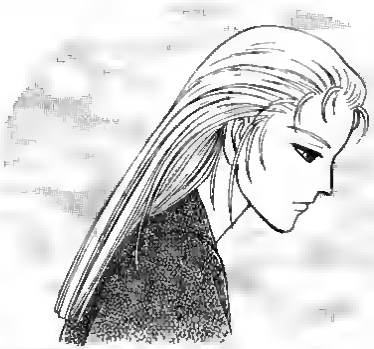

Just let me handle it!
It'll put more weight on your leg!
Don't be dumb.
Hm...
C'mere a sec!
For real!?
Huh?
Okay. Thanks!

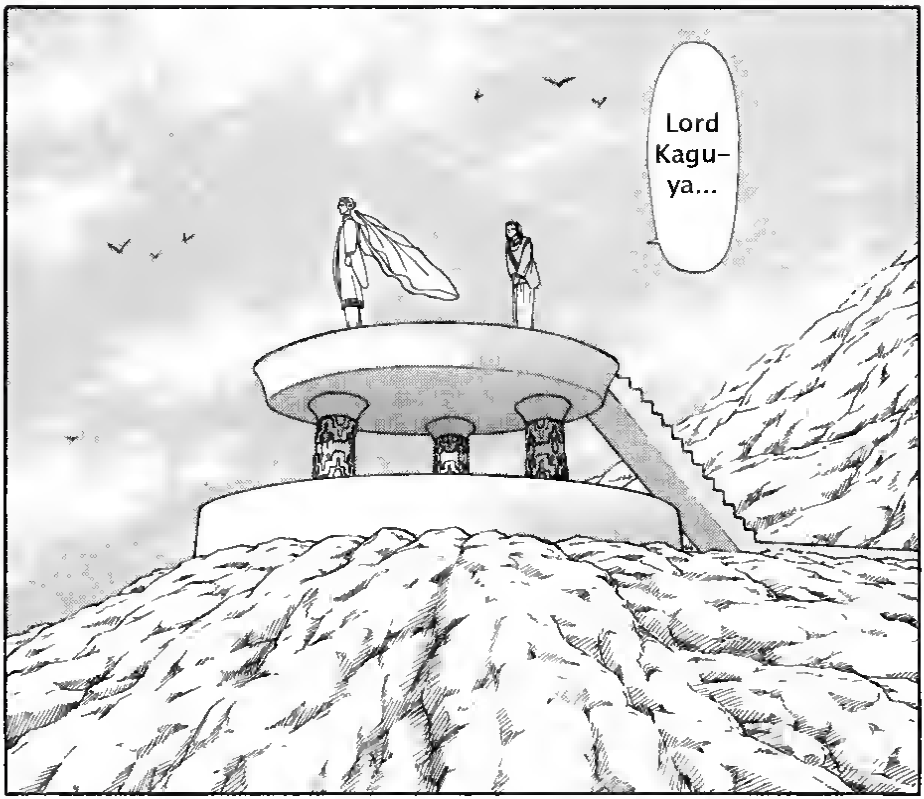

That's the last time!
You can't do stuff like this to a grown man, so...
Katsu-ra...
...
Huh?
Be my little bro-ther!
Aww, man, you're way too cute!

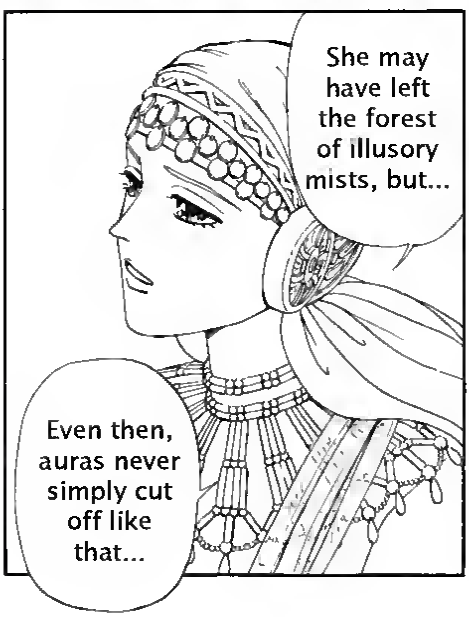
Kill me!
Go on!
Arrrrrgh!
I beat 'im like a rug!
Takaya rejected me once!
Age 16
...and I'll smack you!
Turn me down ...
Uh... um...
You're one scary big "brother."
Well!?
I didn't turn you down!
All right, get ready! We're off!
POW
That's big "sister"!

...didn't want to be a little brother...

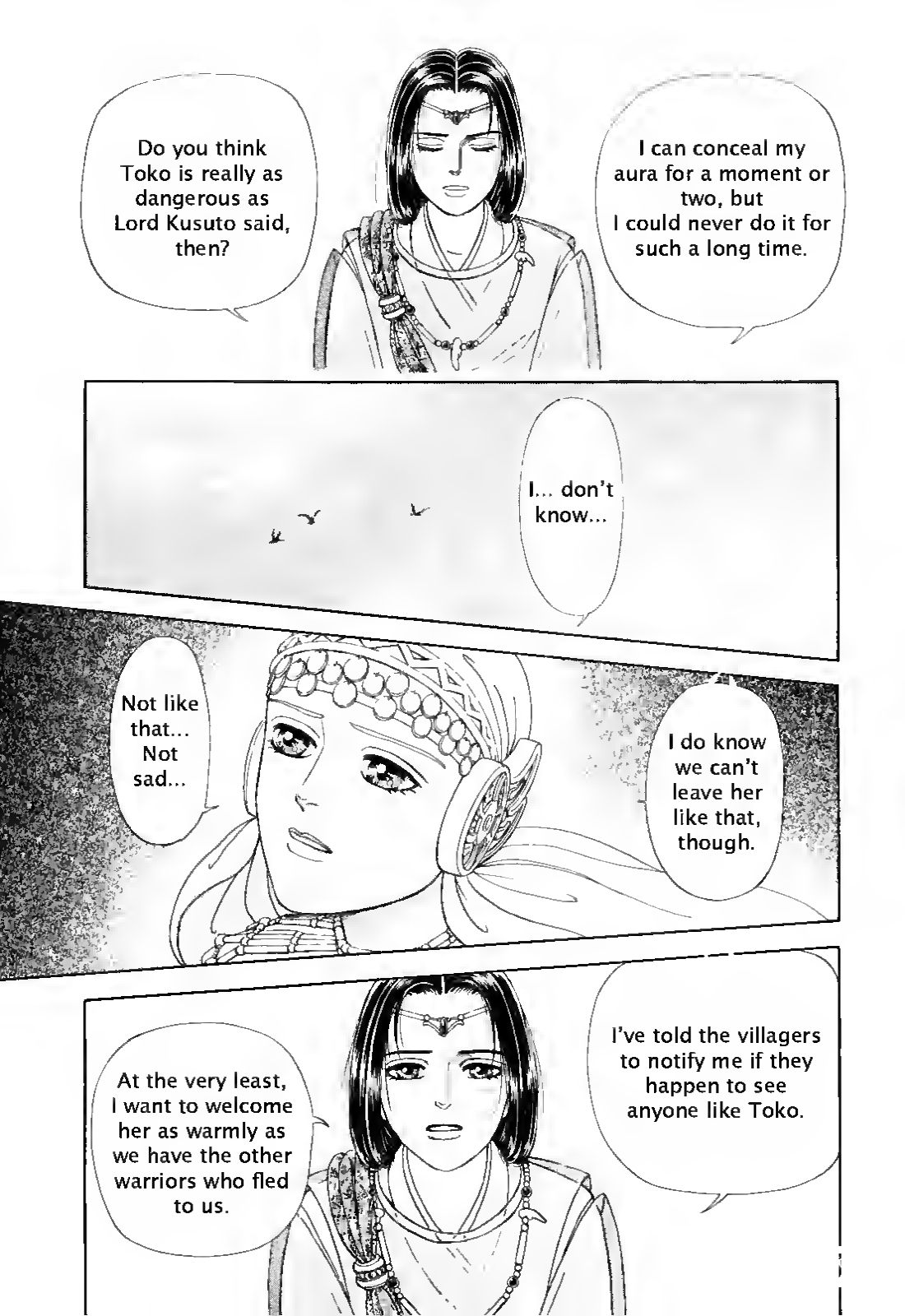
See, Takaya...



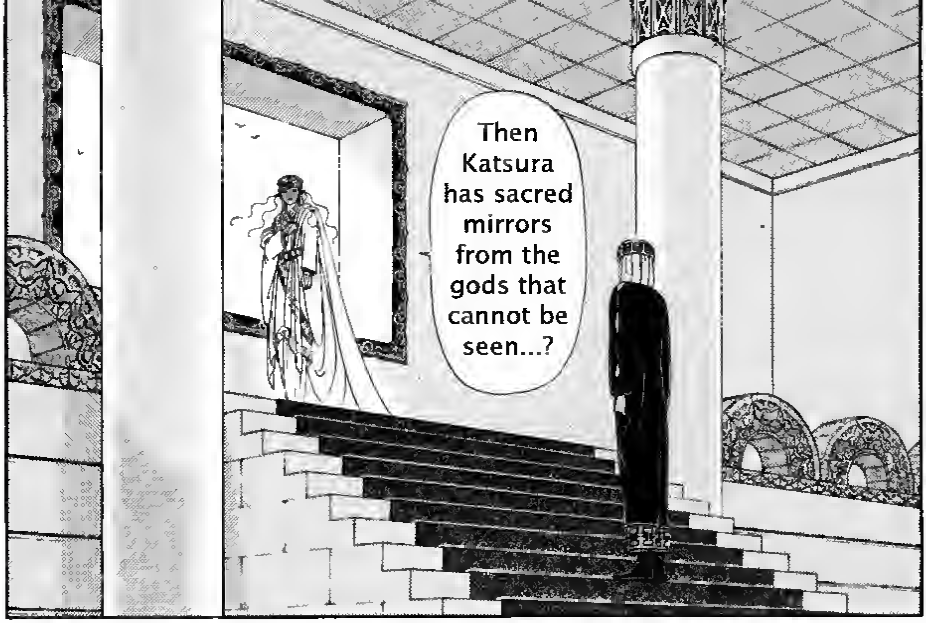

Lord Kaguya...


She may have left the forest of illusory mists, but...
Even then, auras never simply cut off like that...

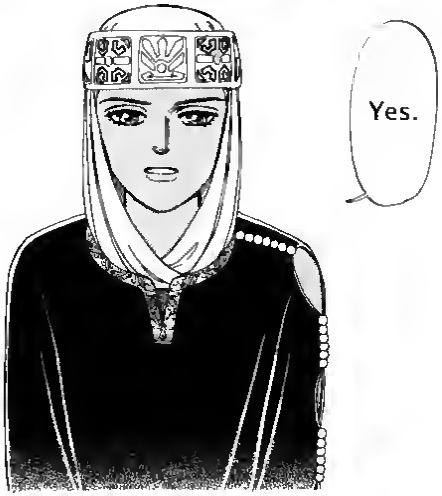
Have you found Toko yet?
Her aura is still gone.

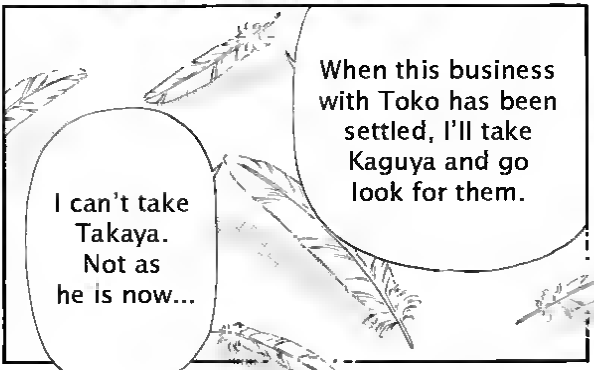

Do you think Toko is really as dangerous as Lord Kusuto said, then?
I can conceal my aura for a moment or two, but I could never do it for such a long time.
I... don't know...
Not like that... Not sad...
I do know we can't leave her like that, though.
At the very least, I want to welcome her as warmly as we have the other warriors who fled to us.
I've told the villagers to notify me if they happen to see anyone like Toko.

Considering Takaya and Toko's history, they may be far happier meeting again as strangers...
But I don't know whether Kusuto will allow that...
They should be beginning their journey to us soon...
When Katsura and Kai reach Fuji...
How am I supposed to tell them about this...?
You mean Lord Takaya's traveling companions?


Then Katsura has sacred mirrors from the gods that cannot be seen...?

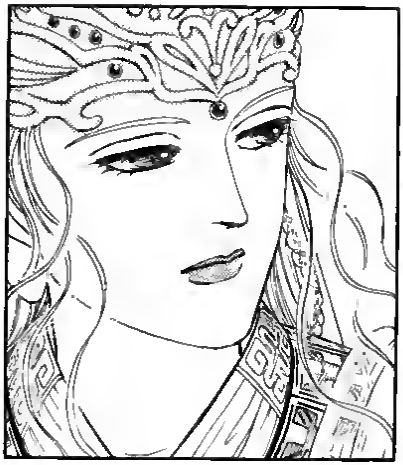
We must get the mirrors from Katsura before Kiyu does.

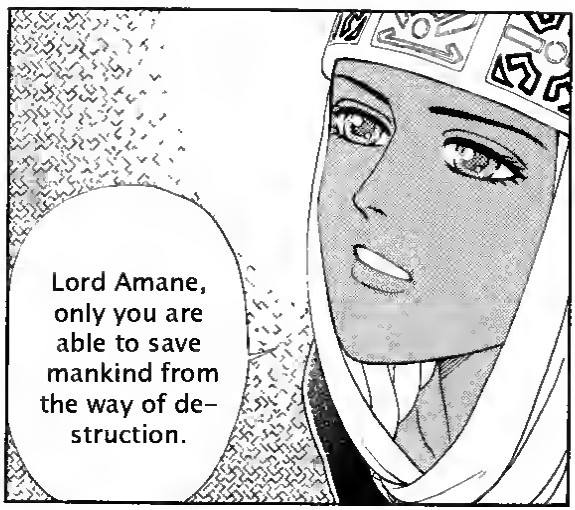

Yes.


When this business with Toko has been settled, I'll take Kaguya and go look for them.
I can't take Takaya. Not as he is now...

If Kiyu has three as well, the sacred mirror will be complete.
Two with Katsura.
Three at Fuji.
However, I believe there's more to it than that.
Most likely ...
And that will solve the mystery of the gods that cannot be seen?
It may hold power so terrible it defies the imagination.
I think the sacred mirror may also be a weapon ...
Of the sacred treasures, the sword is obvious. Viewed another way, even the necklace of yang stones shows the power of the yin stones...

Then you think the gods that cannot be seen knew this war would occur?
Kusu-to...
Who do you think the gods that cannot be seen wanted to entrust the sacred mirror to?
The demi-gods... or the demon gods?
What are you saying!?
Not to either, obviously...
...but to you, Lord Ama-ne.





That conviction alone has been with me from the very beginning...

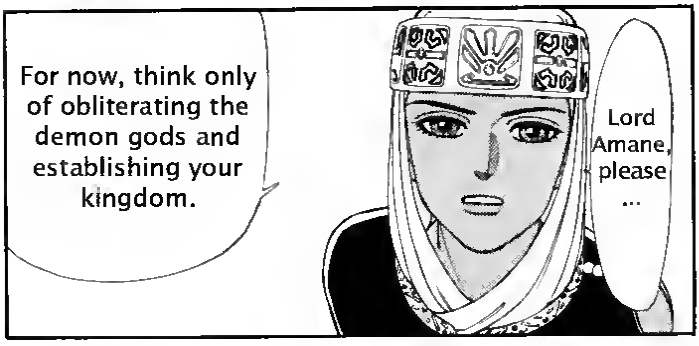
Yes...

That is why I am here.

Why... am I here...?

Why do I have this conviction?

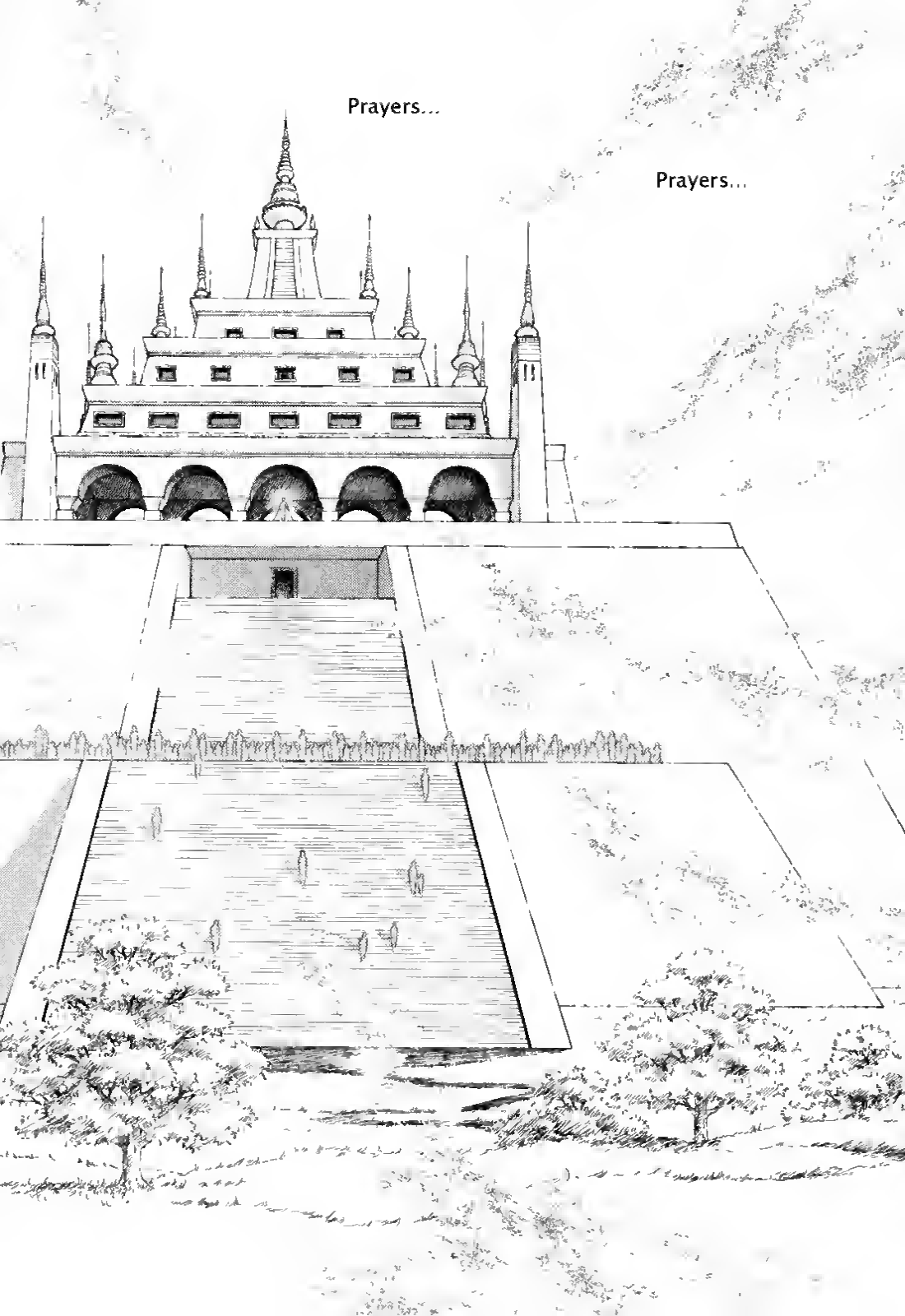
As a result, the question "why" continues to grow inside me.



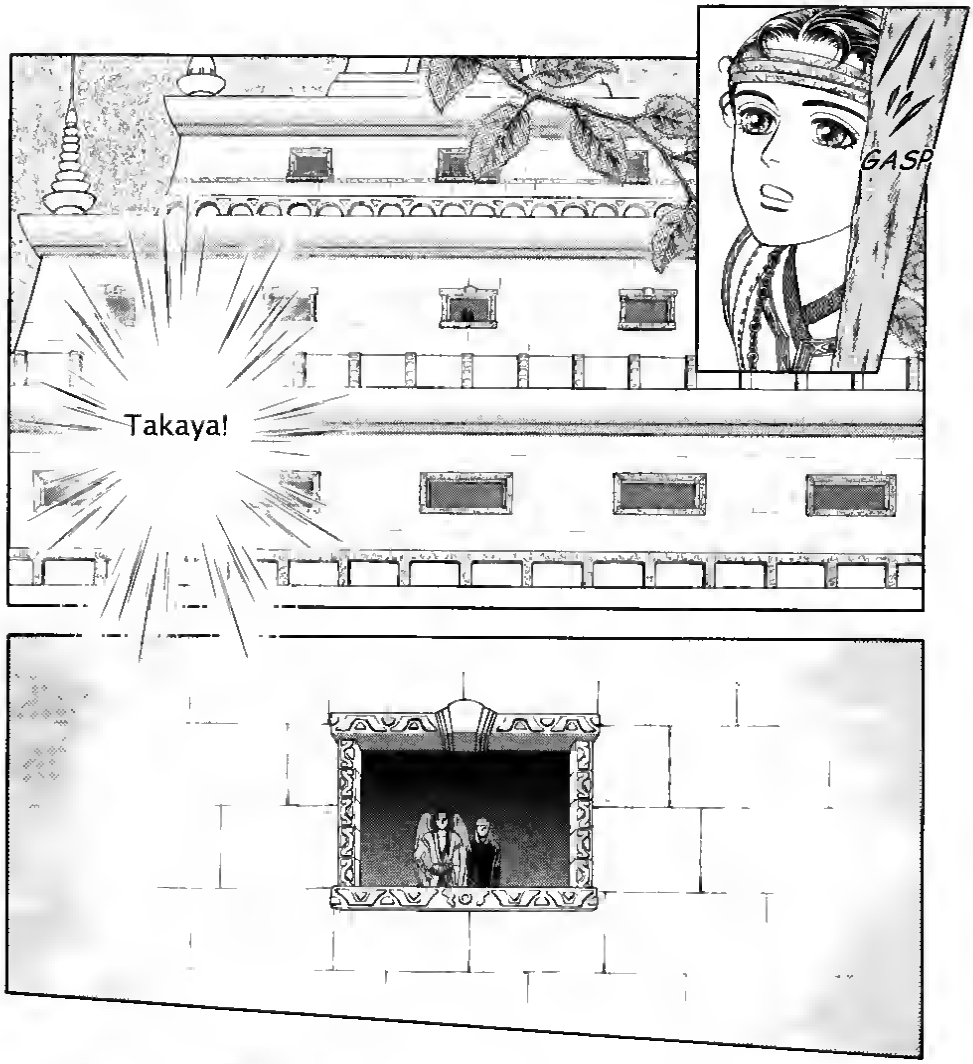
The people pray daily...

A beautiful utopia where time flows slowly, gently...
A land that knows no loneliness or misfortune. A land with no word for "war"...

...and I create a beautiful world ...


Prayers...
Prayers...

Prayers...


GASP
Takaya!

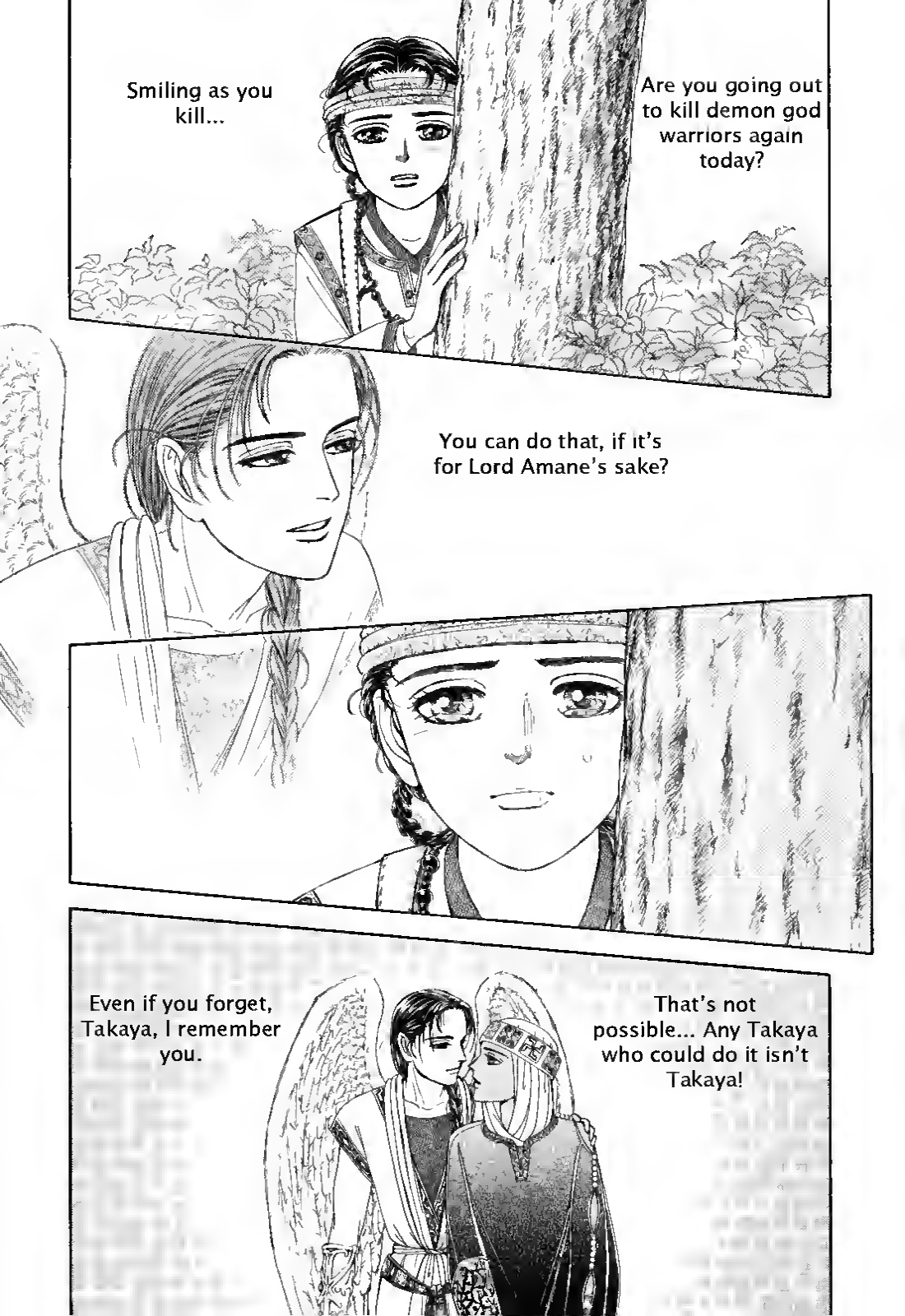
Takaya...

What happened...?

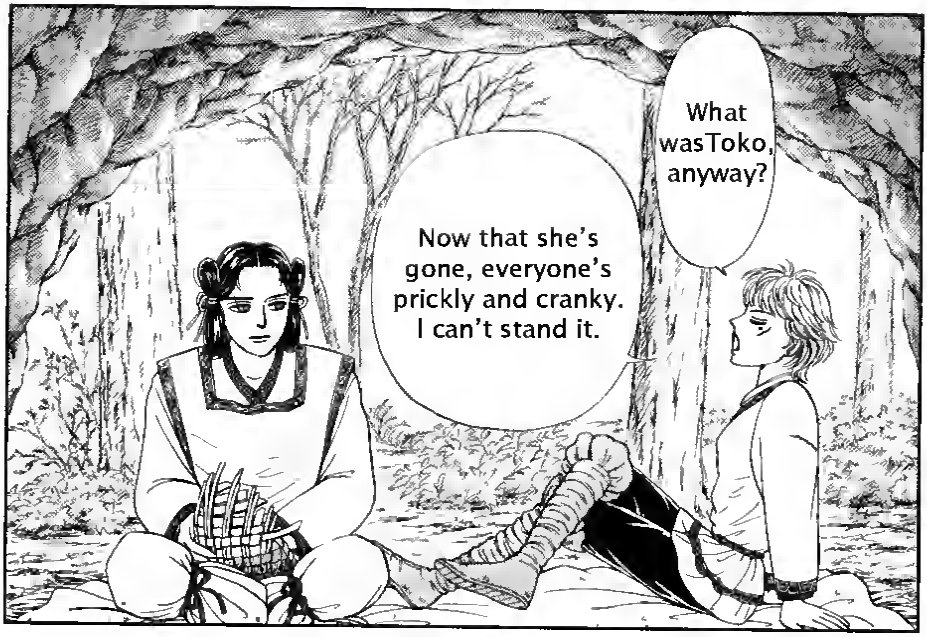
With no memory... of me...

Surrounded by people laughing happily...

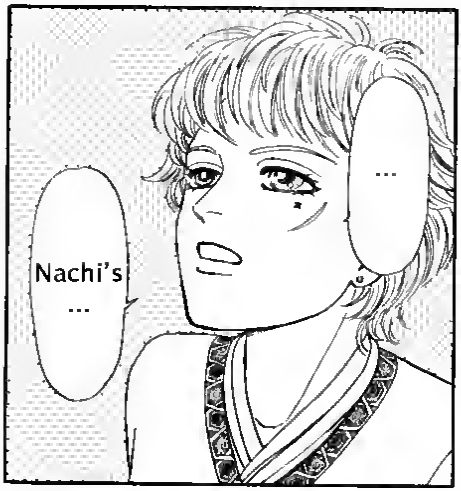
Here in this beautiful village...


Smiling as you kill...
Are you going out to kill demon god warriors again today?
You can do that, if it's for Lord Amane's sake?
Even if you forget, Takaya, I remember you.
That's not possible... Any Takaya who could do it isn't Takaya!

I'll never forget.
Even if you smiled during the day, at night you were trapped by painful dreams...
And both sides were the real Takaya...
Even when Toko woke inside Yoko, she was filled with fragments of you...


What was Toko, anyway?
Now that she's gone, everyone's prickly and cranky. I can't stand it.

Hibiki's glaring even at me.
That guy's just gonna get worse and worse.
Be careful he doesn't kill you.


...
Nachi's ...

How's Nachi?

Ironically, it's like he's living only because you're still alive.
It's almost like he's already dead.
Hey, what's with that face!?
Don't look like you're ready for it!
When Toko gets back... Nachi's going to kill you for sure.
Run from him! If even you die, he'll be completely hollow!
Run away and survive this! You believe Katsura's alive, don't you!?

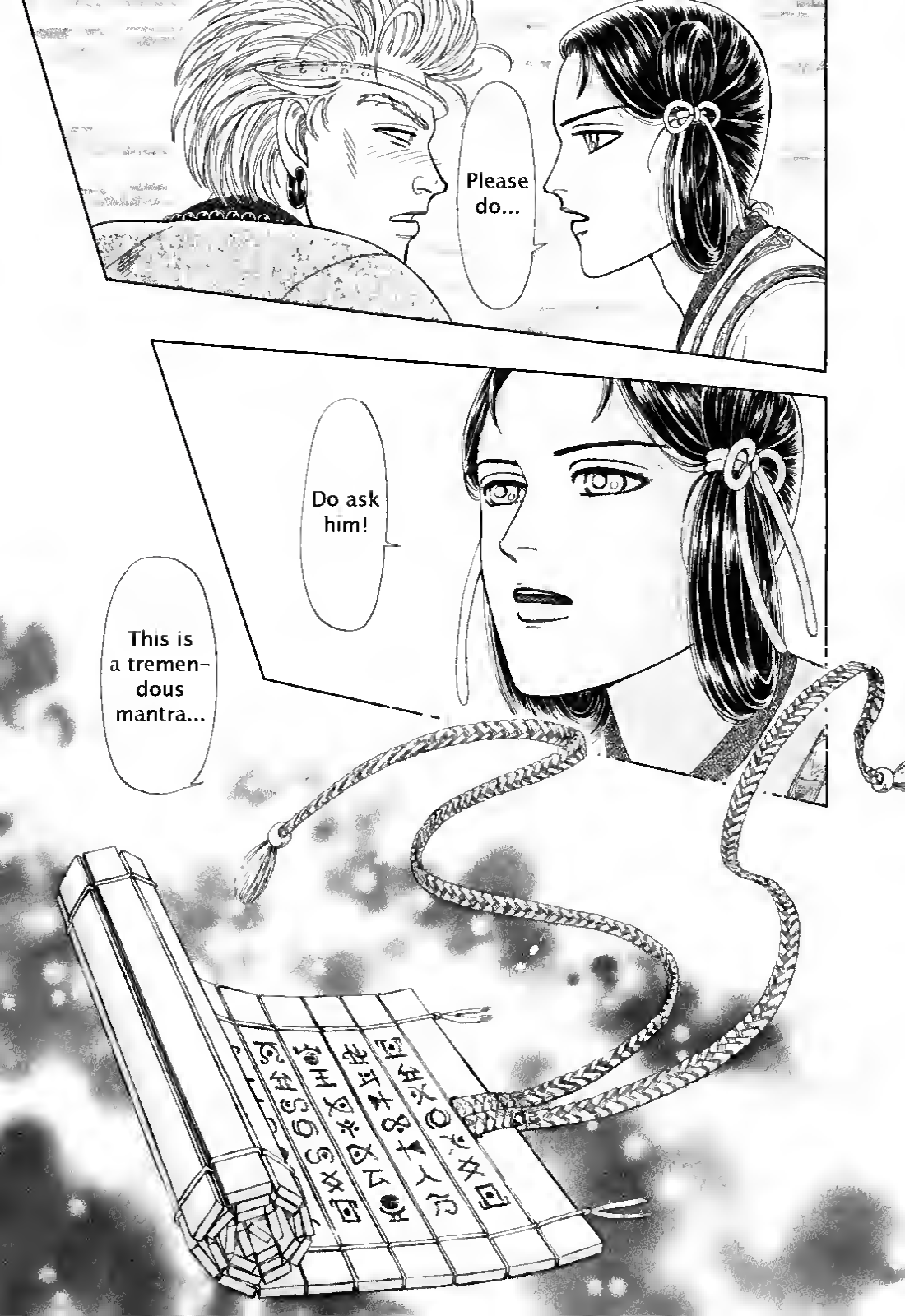
...to be honest...
I...
He doesn't care any more for me than he does for one of the forest rats.
Whether he's saved or destroyed, it's all the same to me.
I just want him to be here... Here and breathing. That's enough.
Even if he's practically dead...
Still...
I want him to stick around.
Huh ...?
Wha ... What?
What're you looking at?
All you think about is going out in a blaze of glory.
Guys don't get stuff like that.

Man, I can't turn my back for a minute.
You're here again!?
Hey!
That's quite a haul! You've been out pillaging again, huh?
Whoa!
Muh... Mine...?
I was protecting your Aohiko for you.
He was so into killing that he almost took some of us out, too, but...
He didn't bring anything back.
Like women's clothes, say...?
Hey, what about Nachi? Did he steal anything?

That was really some-thing.
Sort of fierce and beauti-ful...
The villagers were hiding a sacred sword. The second he picked that up, he started killing like a dancing demon.
Aohiko's #1
I don't want 'im!
Hey!
I'm not giving him to you.
Yeah. We thought they might have a sacred mirror, so we looked all over, but they'd already of-fered theirs to Fuji.
If they were hiding a sacred sword... Was it a village that wor-shiped the gods that cannot be seen?

HOOOH HO HO HO
ほーほほほ
I've always been a thief!
Thief!
Hey, wait!
Ah!
I'm taking this and this!
What's this...?
She took the best clothes and booze.
ARR RGH!
...
Oh. I thought you'd like that, so I swiped it.

It's an old mantra.
Well ...?
Very old...
What sort of mantra is it?
I'd have to chant it...
Besides, it looks as if it requires a sacred bead necklace...
Whoa, pretty ♥
I'll have to ask the captain, then.

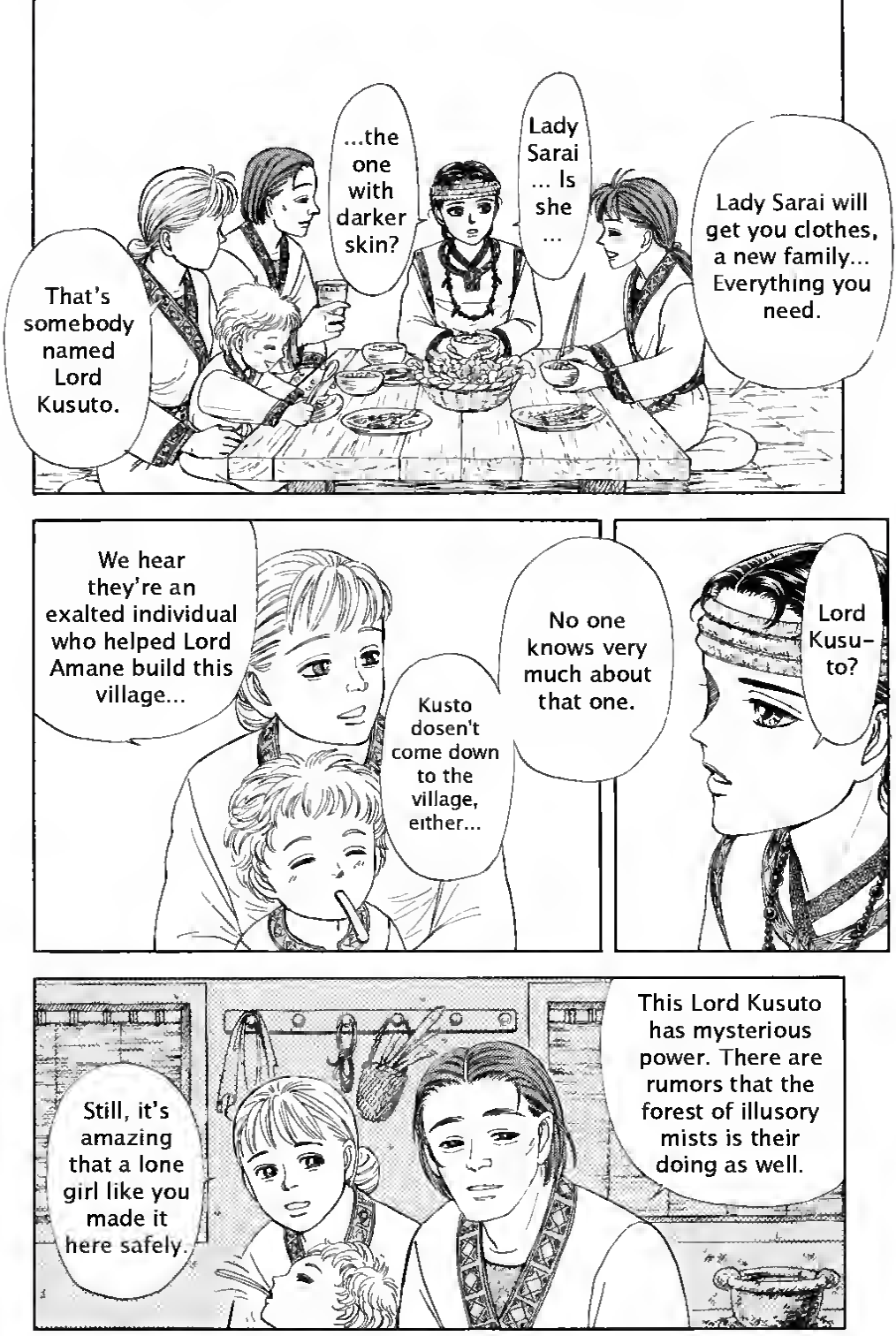

Please do...
Do ask him!
This is a tremendous mantra...

This isn't quite enough ...
Maybe it's the yang stone Yachio gave me.
I haven't gotten very hungry, but...

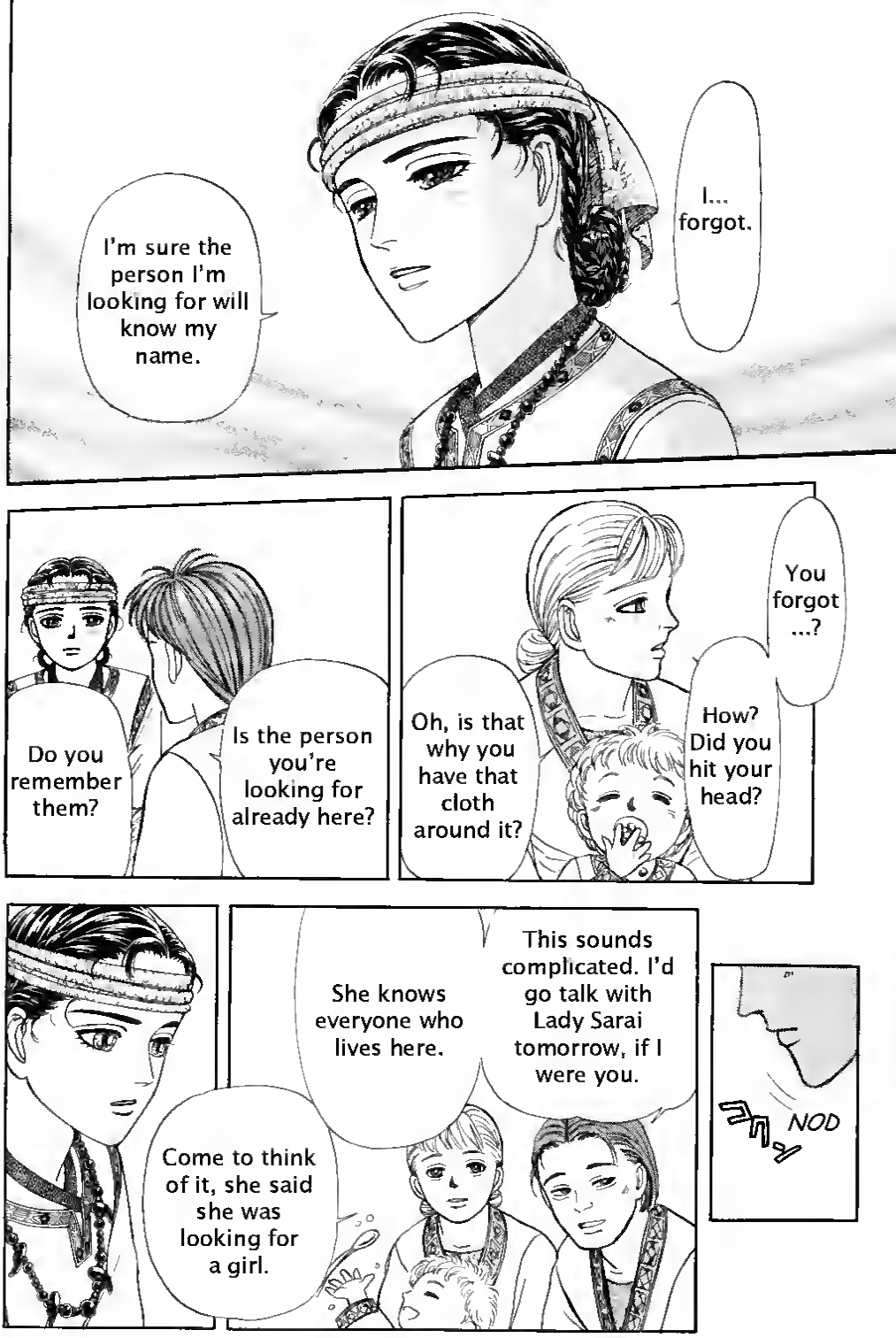
They didn't find me...
...so I got sleepy.
What...?
YAWN...
Hey, little one ...
Were you playing hide and seek?
Y... yeah ...
It's almost dark. You need to go home.
This place is so safe that even sleeping out here isn't dangerous...
Kanta!

Nuh-uh...
So this is where you were hiding! C'mere, Kanta!
Oh! Sorry. That's my little brother.
Come to my place, then.
Y...yes ...
Did you just get here?
Say!
Come on. You're hungry, right?
I'm Shota!
Once you've made it here, there's nothing to worry about.
No... It's okay ...

We'll take you to see Lady Sarai tomorrow.
If I'm too stubborn about refusing, they might get suspicious...
It's really close.
Over here!
This way!
Lady Sarai?
Well, it doesn't matter. Go ahead, eat up.
Did you come here by yourself?


That's somebody named Lord Kusuto.
...the one with darker skin?
Lady Sarai ... Is she ...
Lady Sarai will get you clothes, a new family... Everything you need.
We hear they're an exalted individual who helped Lord Amane build this village...
Kusto dosen't come down to the village, either...
No one knows very much about that one.
Lord Kusu-to?
Still, it's amazing that a lone girl like you made it here safely.
This Lord Kusuto has mysterious power. There are rumors that the forest of illusory mists is their doing as well.

Takaya is getting rid of them now, though, so it's okay.
Taka-ya...
They say a horde of warriors has entered the forest and been led astray by the mists, and is killing friend and foe alike...
Didn't you run into any demon god war-riors?
He's strong and kind and really cool!
He's ama-zing!
He's a winged hero.
What's your name?
And your name?
I know...


I'm sure the person I'm looking for will know my name.
I... forgot.
Do you remember them?
Is the person you're looking for already here?
You forgot ...?
How? Did you hit your head?
Oh, is that why you have that cloth around it?
Come to think of it, she said she was looking for a girl.
She knows everyone who lives here.
This sounds complicated. I'd go talk with Lady Sarai tomorrow, if I were you.
NOD

Are there ...
There's nothing to trouble you here. Everyone's gentle and kind...
Could that have been you?
Oh, don't worry.
She's really, really kind.
Especially Lady Sarai.
Are there people who used to be demon god warriors here?

They've had their names and their pasts changed. They've been completely reborn.
They don't remember it.
Well, they're here, but...
There are...
They don't ...
... remember?
Some memories are so painful you couldn't live if you didn't forget, you know...
Here, they can make you forget all your pain and sadness.
No...
Would the person you're looking for be one of them?

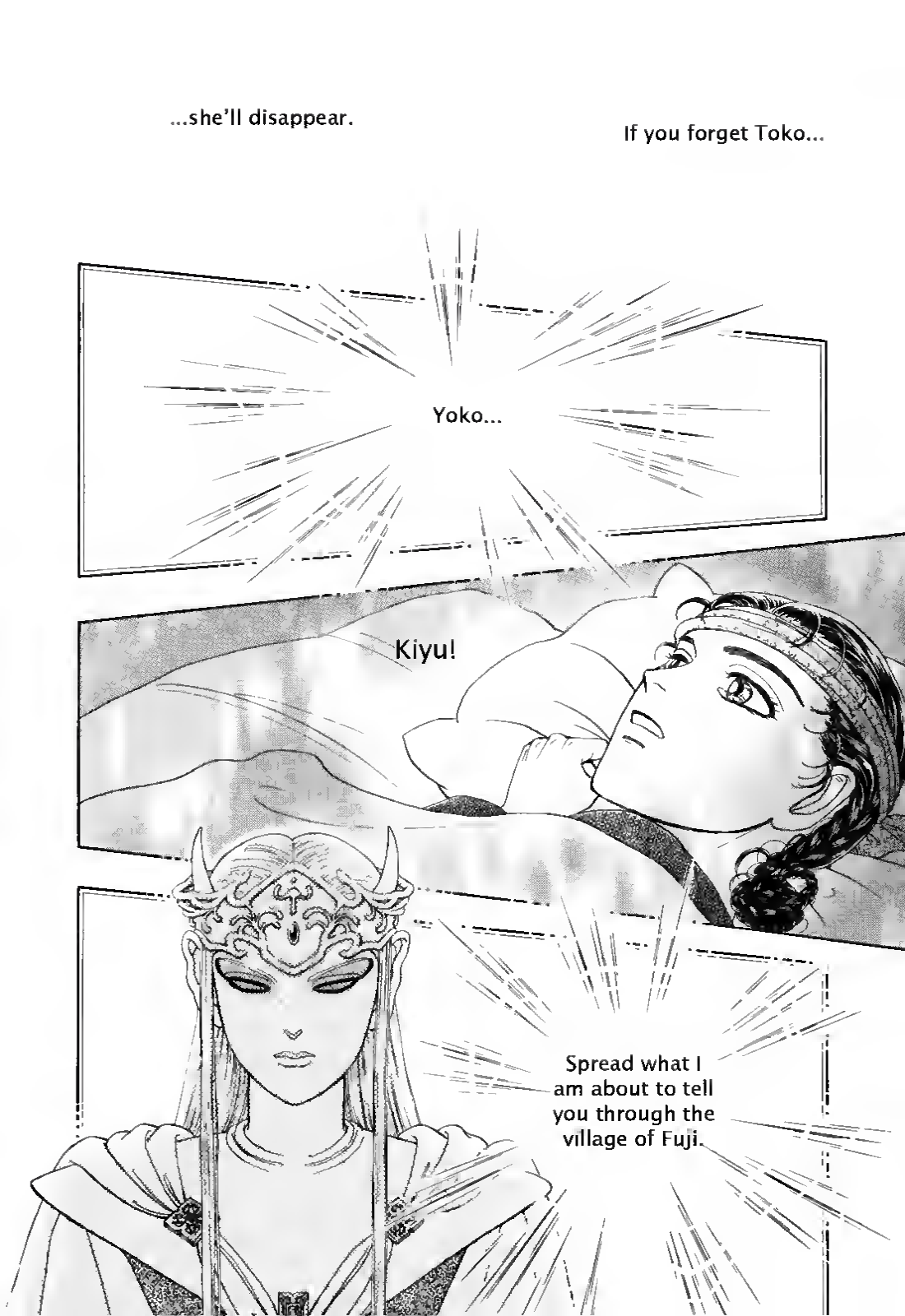
You poor child... It looks as if you've seen a lot of hardship.
You, too...
Anyone can be happy here.
Forget...
Find happiness...
You'll feel much better tomorrow.
You should sleep.
Is Takaya...
...happy?

Forgetting his sadness...
Forgetting his pain...
Forgetting me...
Takaya looked happy.
He looked happy.

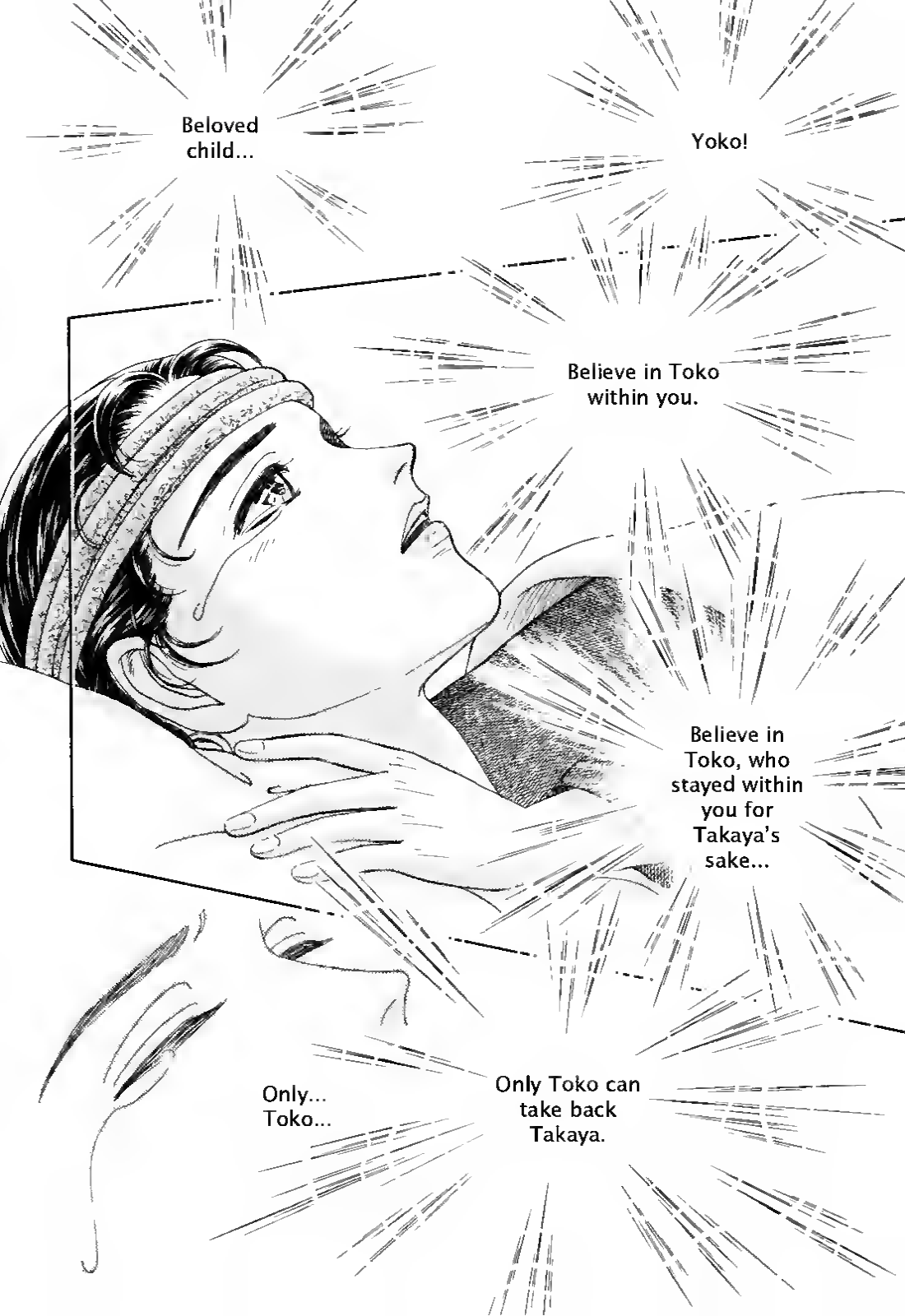
I'm sorry. This little guy pesters everybody. Just ignore him.
Kanta, quit!
She's tired.
Mmph!
Sing me a lullaby ...
Lady!
Ha-yo ne-yo-ne
Ha-yo ne-yo-ne

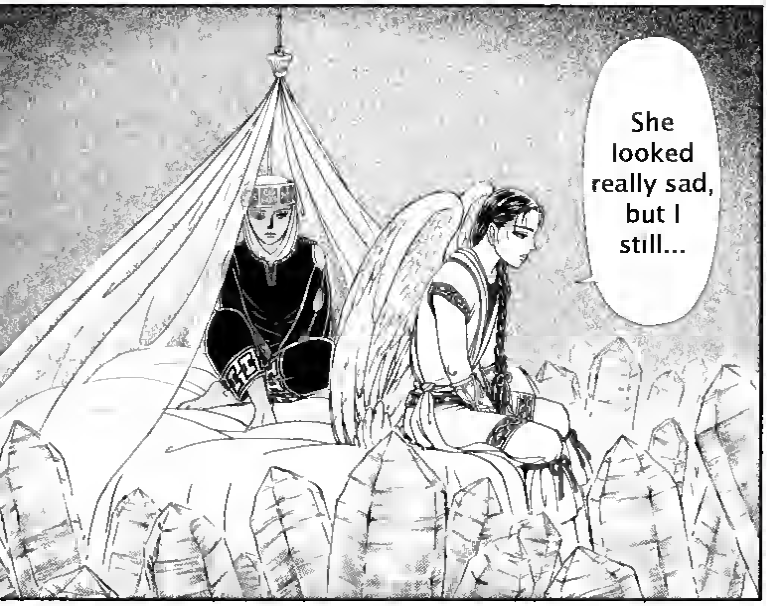
Shh
Eh heh heh!
What can you see when you ... close your eyes?
...or tears ... with laughter ...
You can't fall asleep! ...
The red flowers of a far-away land ...
The white waves of an ocean never seen ...
We'll meet again in... ...the land of dreams ...
Ha-yo ne-yo-ne
Ha-yo ne-yo-ne

Toko!
Toko!
Ha-yo ne-yo-ne
If you get lost in an unfamiliar wood...
Ha-yo ne-yo-ne
Where shall we play?
I will come and find you...
Have fun with everyone...
Hide-and-seek...
Takaya...

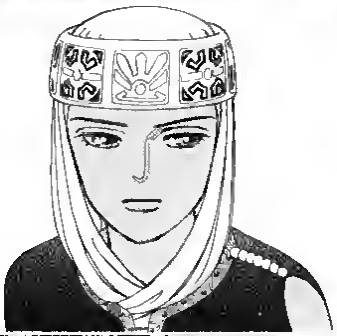

...she'll disappear.
If you forget Toko...
Yoko...
Kiyu!
Spread what I am about to tell you through the village of Fuji.

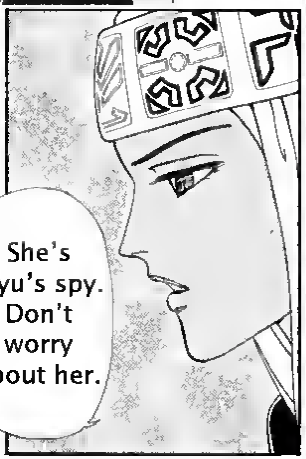
We'll draw Takaya away from the village.
I'll question him directly.
I must know of this power that has sealed his memories and is controlling him.


Beloved child...
Yoko!
Believe in Toko within you.
Believe in Toko, who stayed within you for Takaya's sake...
Only... Toko...
Only Toko can take back Takaya.



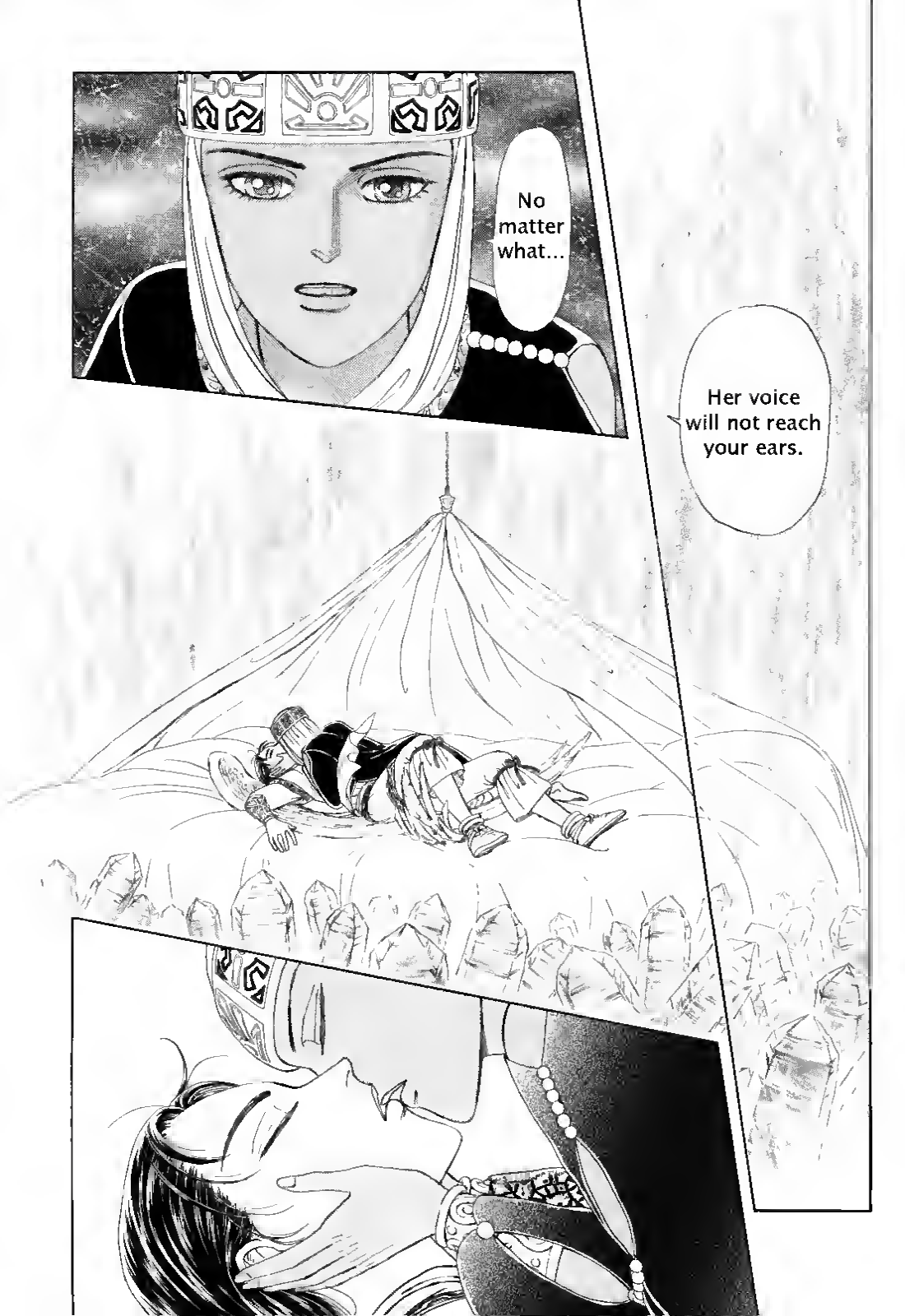
Why did I let go of her hand back there?

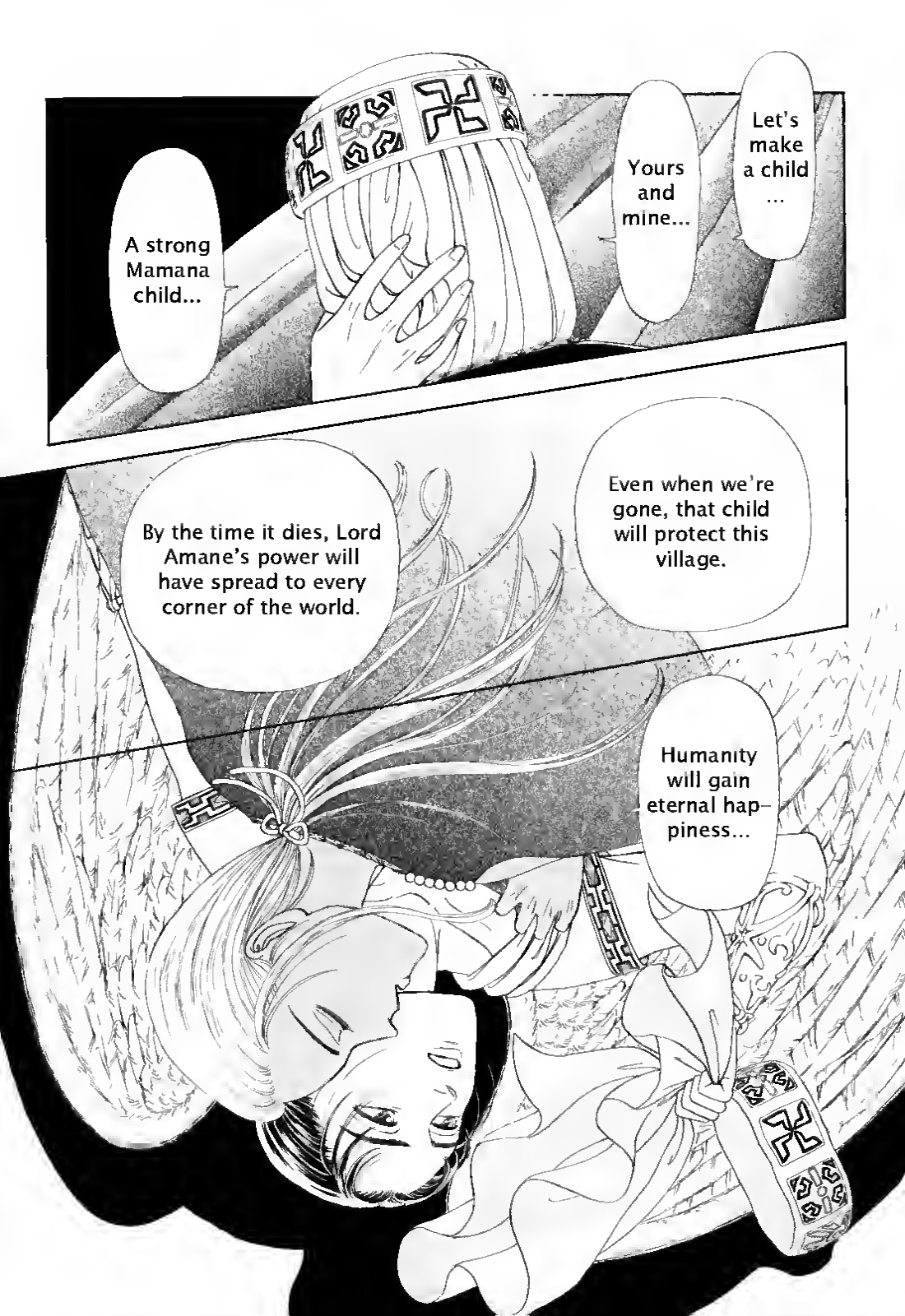


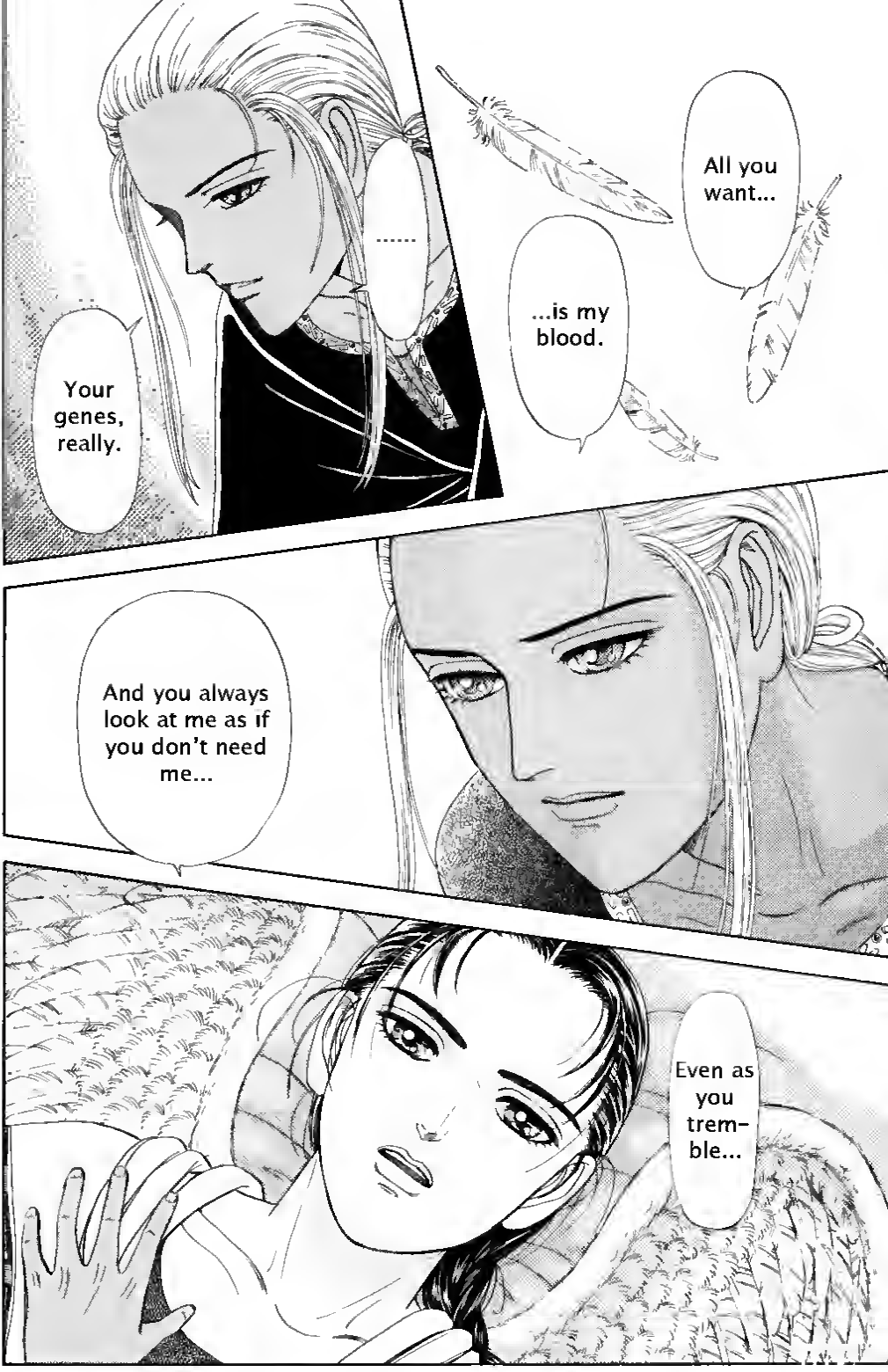


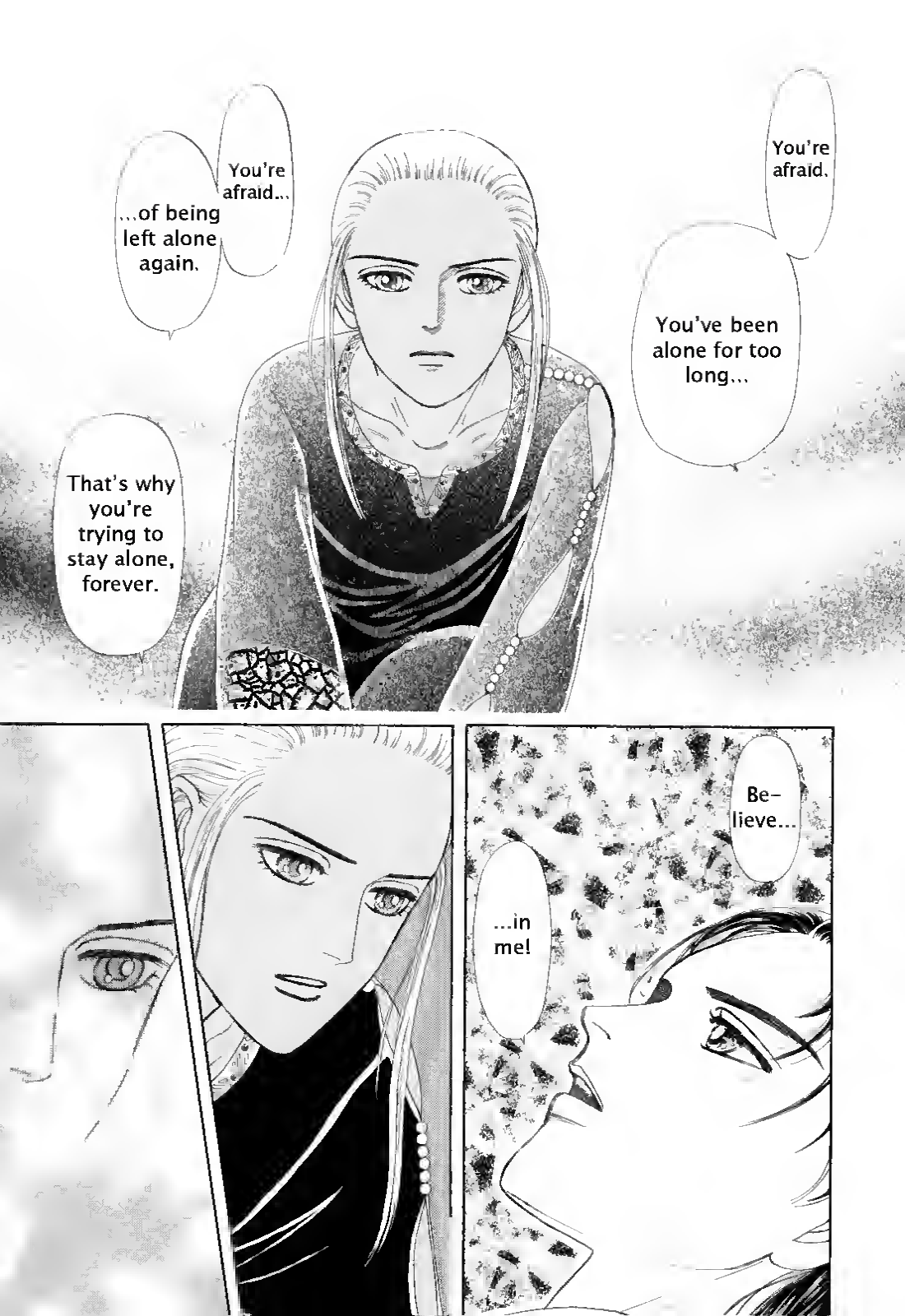
She was still just a...
What is this...?
What?
Don't think.
Don't.

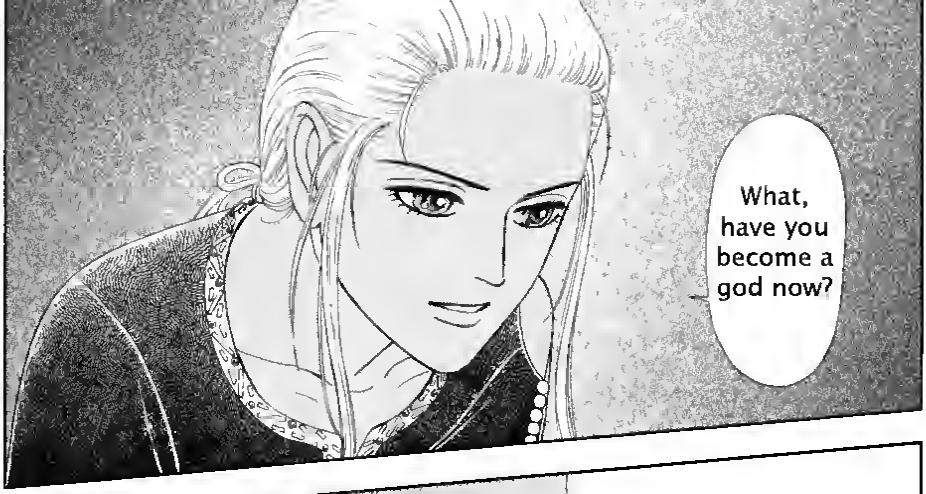
You're tired of thinking...
You want to become someone's property.
You belong to me...
Don't worry at all.
So don't think.
Your eyes will not see that girl again.
Never again ...
Kusuto...


No matter what...
Her voice will not reach your ears.


Let's make a child ...
Yours and mine...
A strong Mamana child...
Even when we're gone, that child will protect this village.
By the time it dies, Lord Amane's power will have spread to every corner of the world.
Humanity will gain eternal happiness...

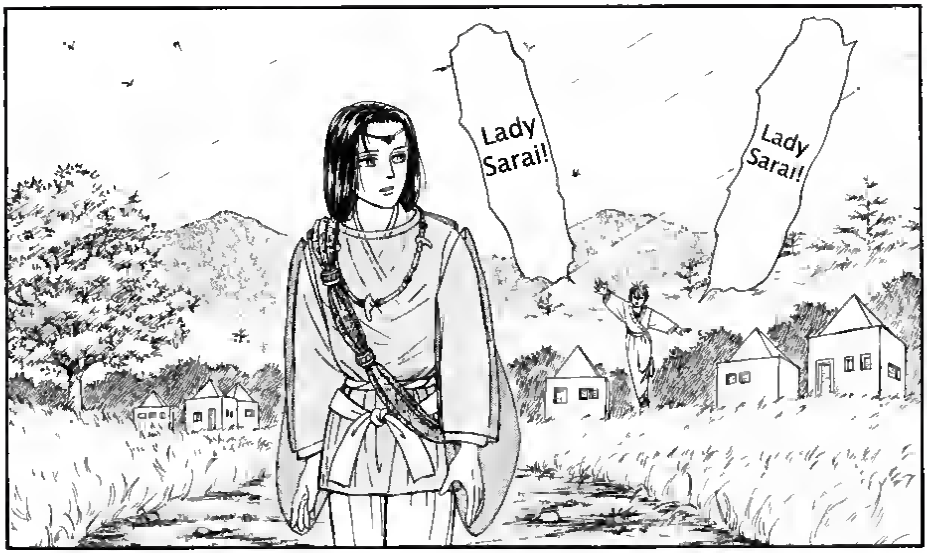

Your genes, really.
.....
All you want...
...is my blood.
And you always look at me as if you don't need me...
Even as you trem-ble...

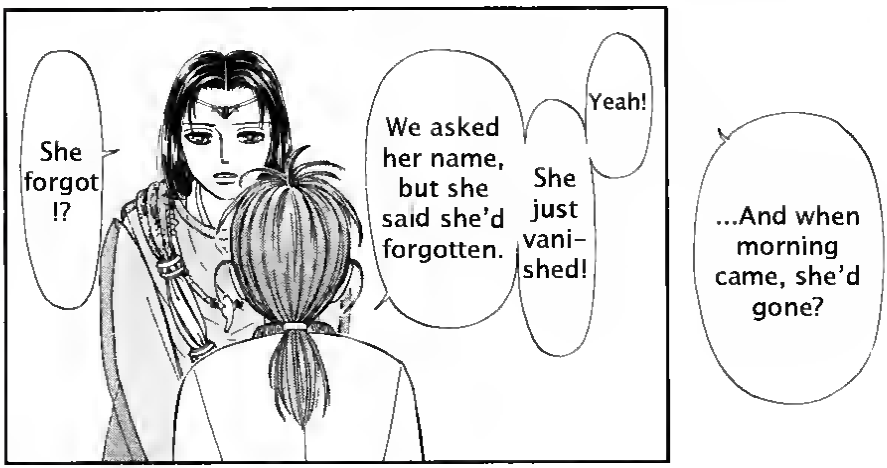

You're afraid...
...of being left alone again.
You're afraid.
You've been alone for too long...
That's why you're trying to stay alone, forever.
Be-lieve...
...in me!


What, have you become a god now?

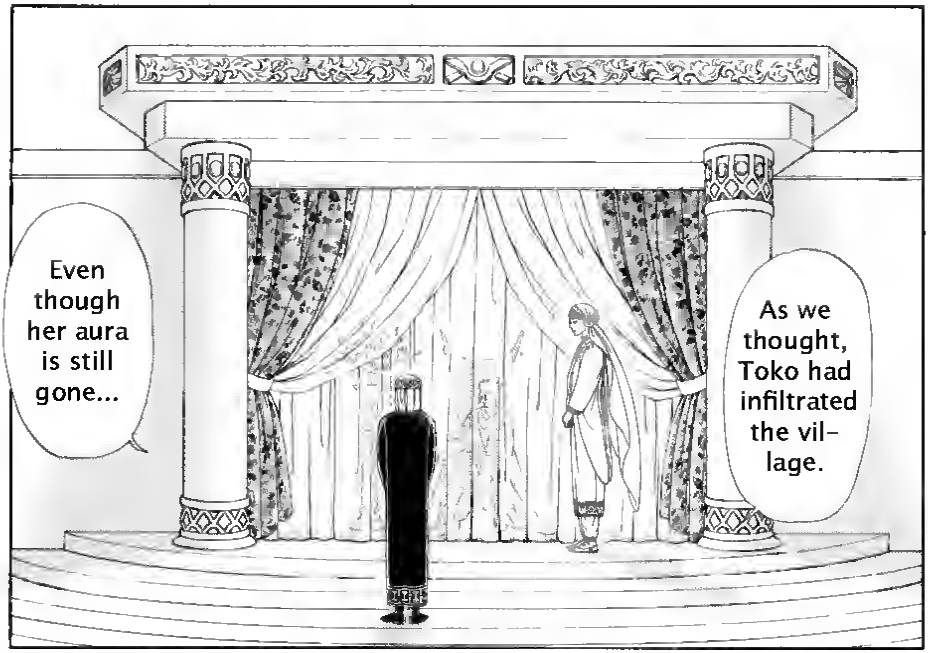
You...

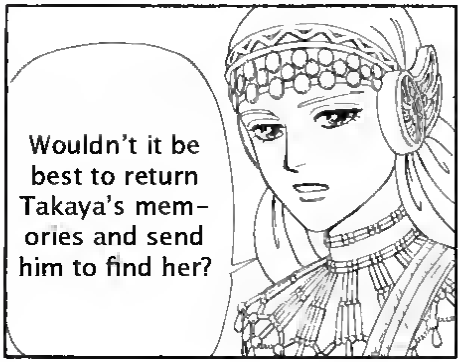
...haven't realized you're sad.

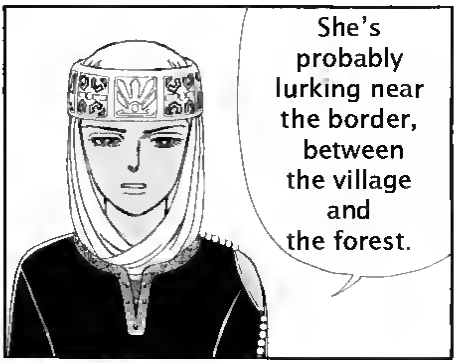

Lady Sarai!
Lady Sarai!

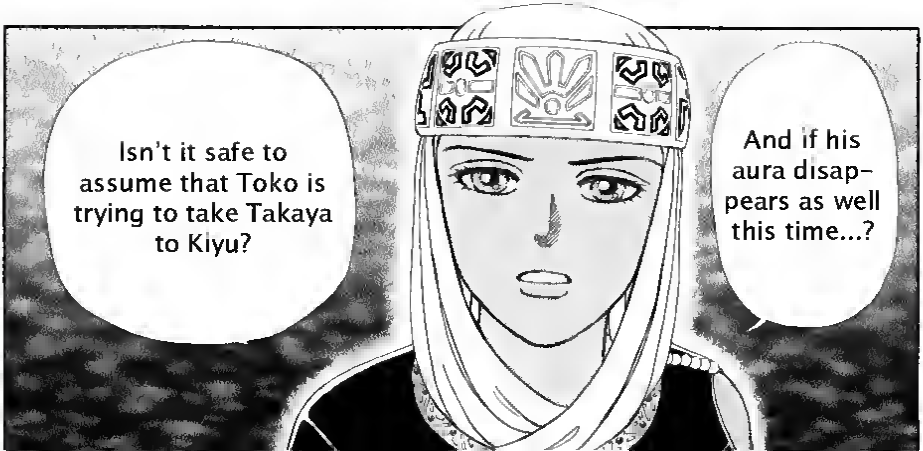

She forgot !?
We asked her name, but she said she'd forgotten.
She just vani-shed!
Yeah!
...And when morning came, she'd gone?

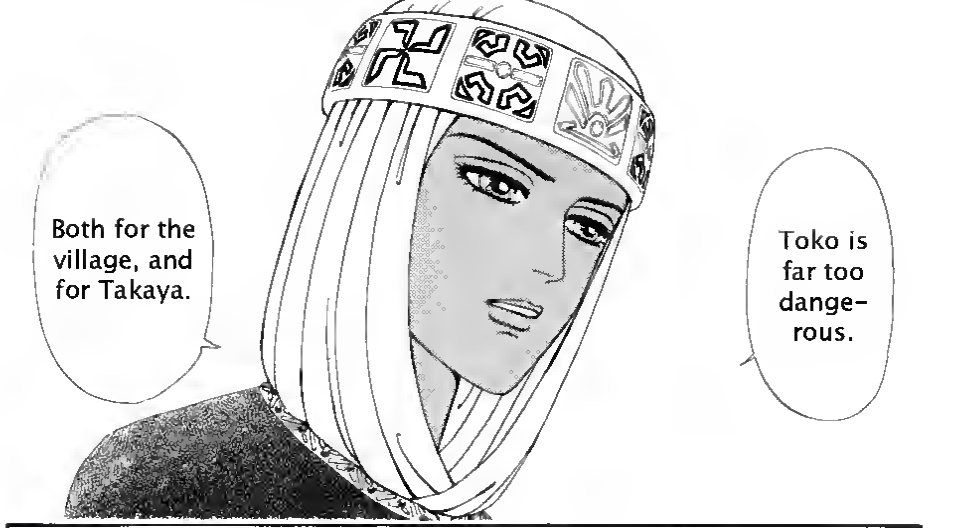
Please help her, Lady Sarai.
She looked like she was about to cry.
She said they'd know her name...
She was looking for someone who was here already...
We'll have to find her quickly.
Yes...
Toko...


Even though her aura is still gone...
As we thought, Toko had infiltrated the village.

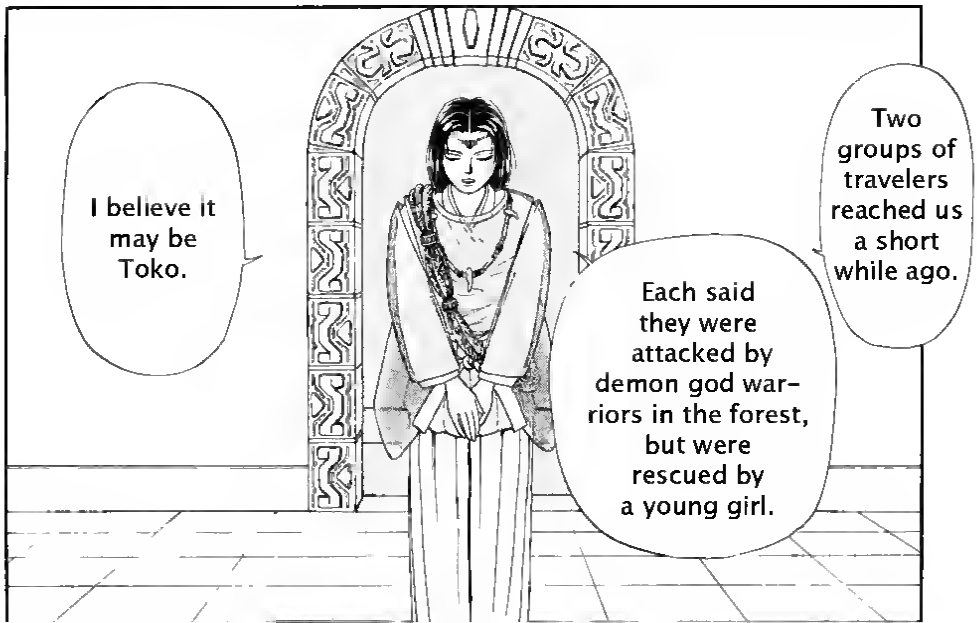

Wouldn't it be best to return Takaya's memories and send him to find her?

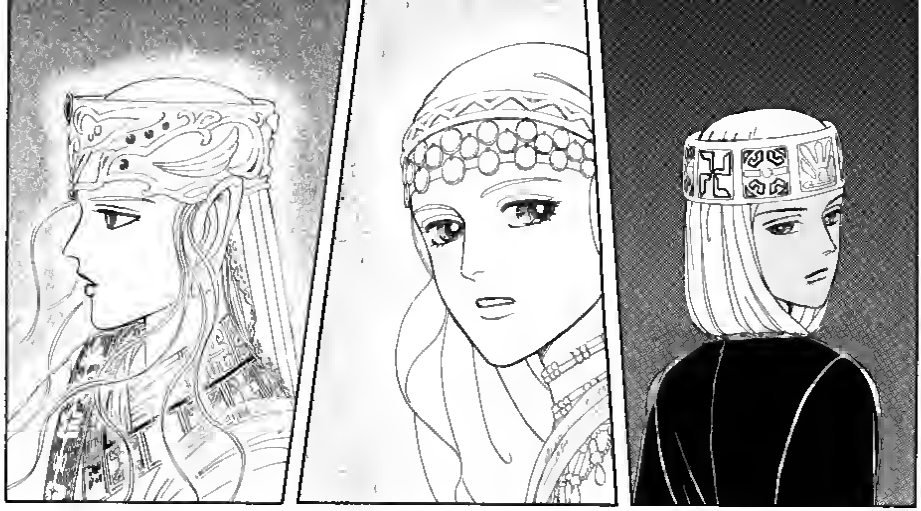

She's probably lurking near the border, between the village and the forest.


Isn't it safe to assume that Toko is trying to take Takaya to Kiyu?
And if his aura disappears as well this time...?

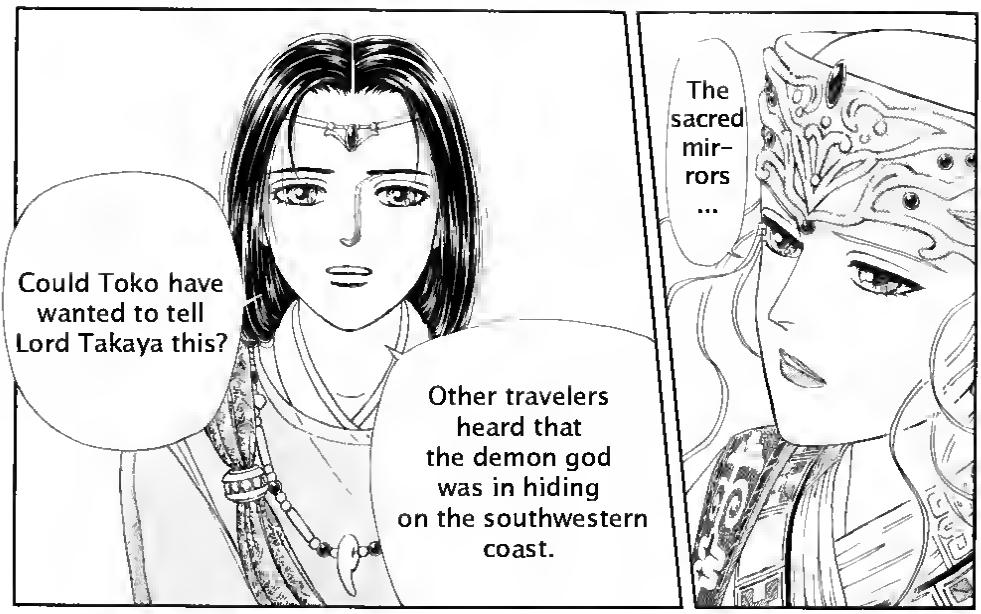

Both for the village, and for Takaya.
Toko is far too dange-rous.

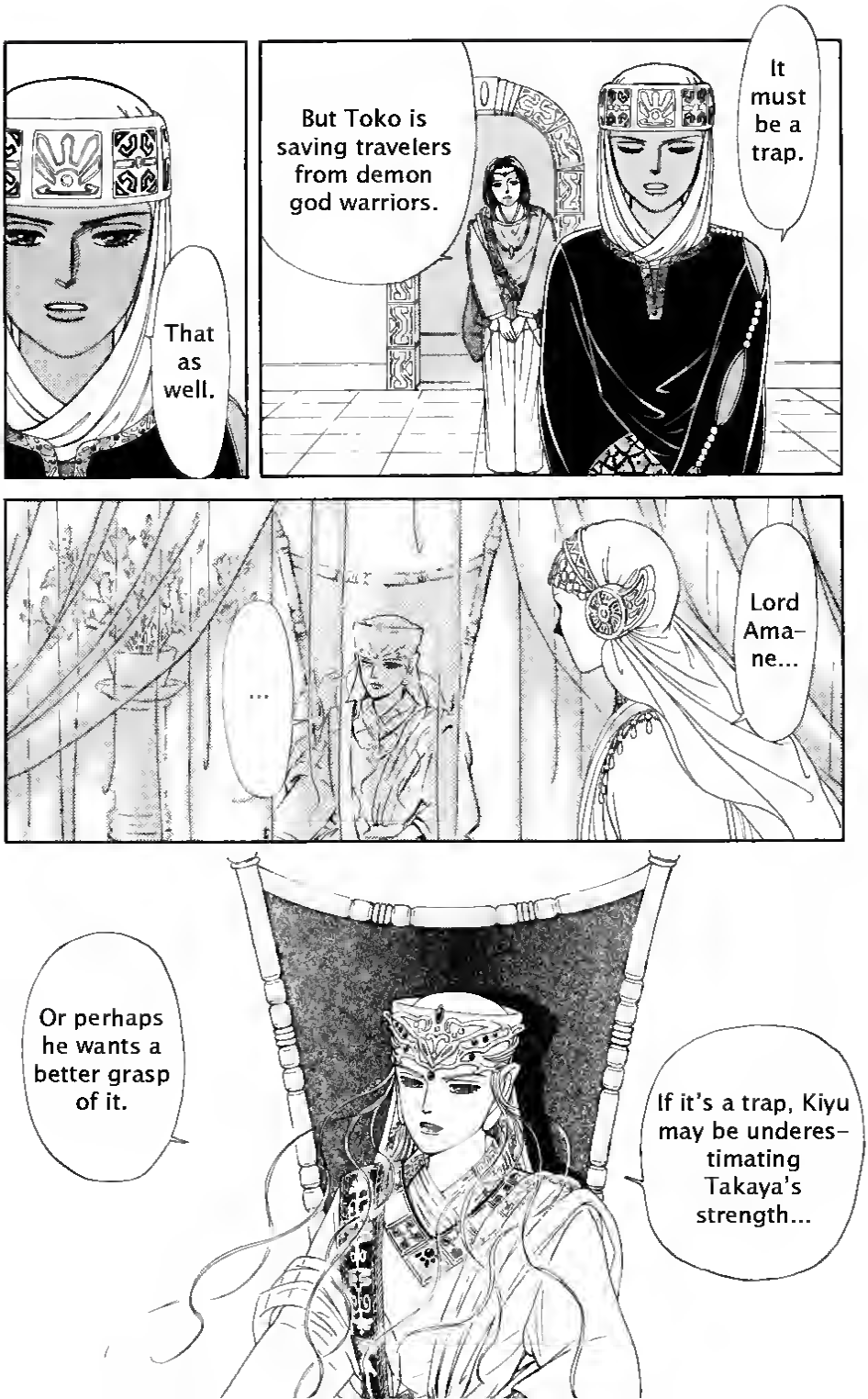
Excuse me.

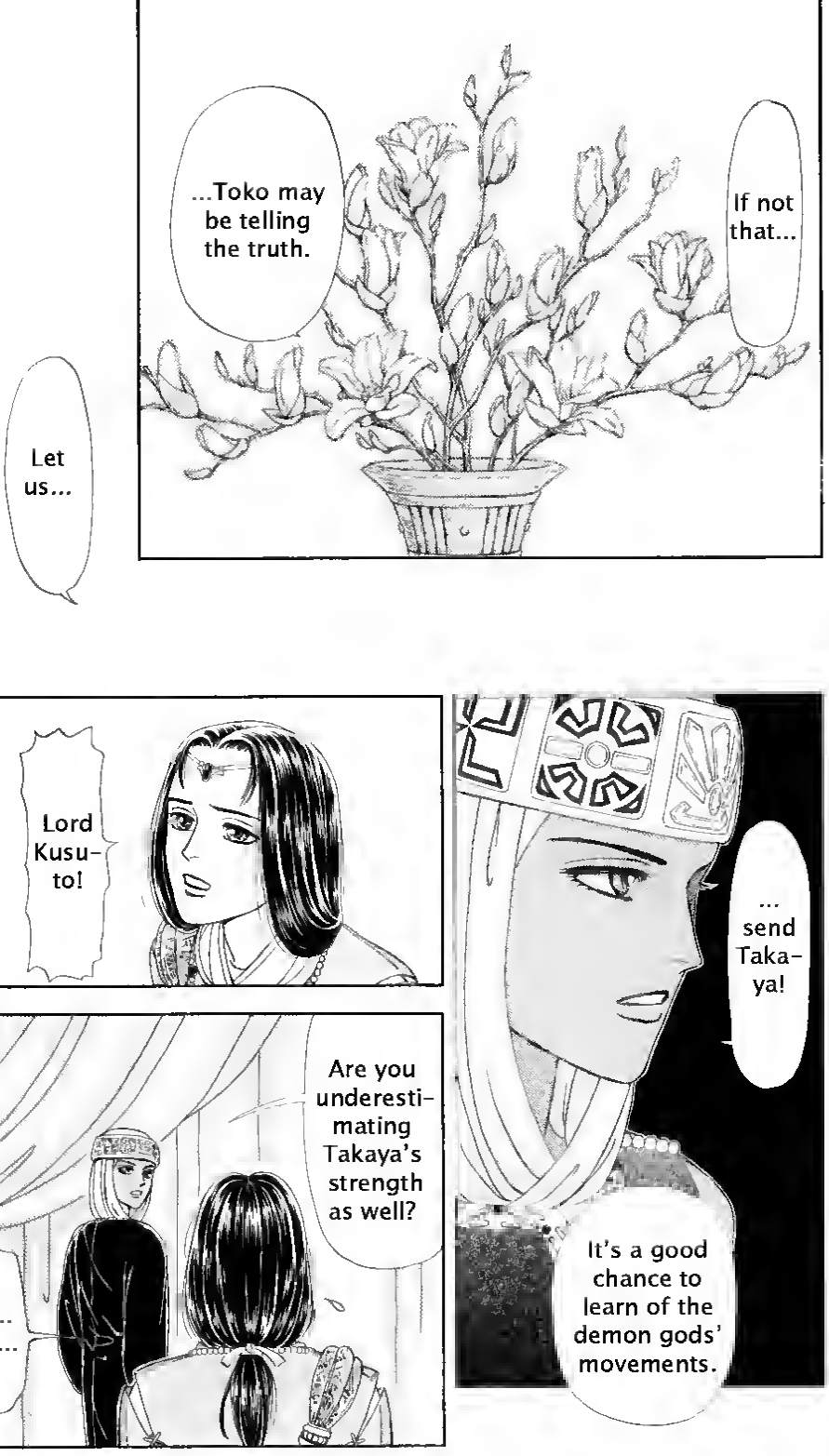

I believe it may be Toko.
Two groups of travelers reached us a short while ago.
Each said they were attacked by demon god war-riors in the forest, but were rescued by a young girl.



...the girl said a demon god from Kiyu's camp rebelled and stole the sacred mirrors.
...Ac-cording to the travel-ers...


Could Toko have wanted to tell Lord Takaya this?
Other travelers heard that the demon god was in hiding on the southwestern coast.
The sacred mir-rors ...


That as well.
But Toko is saving travelers from demon god warriors.
It must be a trap.
...
Lord Amane...
Or perhaps he wants a better grasp of it.
If it's a trap, Kiyu may be underestimating Takaya's strength...


...Toko may be telling the truth.
If not that...
Let us...
Lord Kusu-to!
... send Taka-ya!
It's a good chance to learn of the demon gods' movements.
Are you underesti-mating Takaya's strength as well?
N... no...

Toko is...
...a girl with a strange wave-length...
I'll accompany Takaya as well.
Lord Amane.
Whatever happens, we must not lose Takaya.
I will send demigods from the cavern of sacred sleep with you.
Thank you.
I will ...
Sarai. Exhort the villagers to find Toko as quickly as possible.

...That is be-
cause she
died and
rose again in
the soul of
her twin.
The
soul...
Both demigods and
demon gods know all
they must know from
the very
beginning, and even
so...
...we
know
nothing
of the
soul...

We only see glimpses of it in the vague teachings of the gods that cannot be seen...
Even though it is likely a teaching like no other, one which must not be lost...

I cannot tell what sort of power this ancient mantra will produce...
...without chanting it aloud.
In this shape ...
In these sounds ...
What I do know is that something great dwells within it.

True ...
In any case, power born from yang stones never harms people.
Very well...
Chant.
HAAA AAH

Oh...

One is many...
Many are one...

My consciousness...

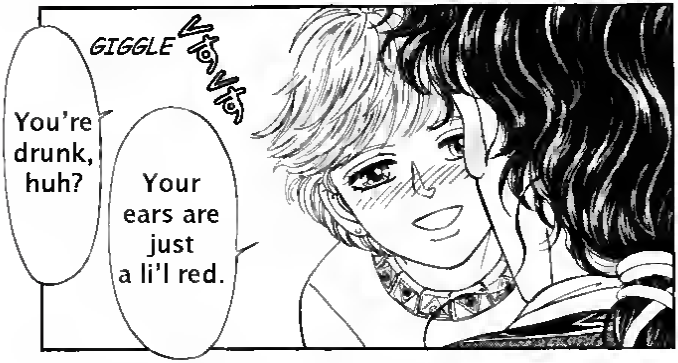
...is leaving...
...my body...
ぎゅ+8◀人ア

どこまで落ちるの…

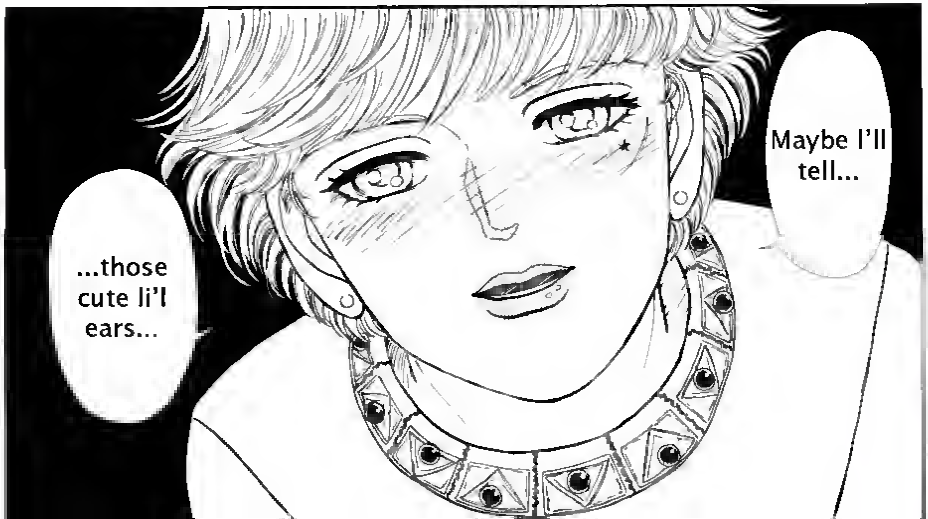
Aohi-
ko!

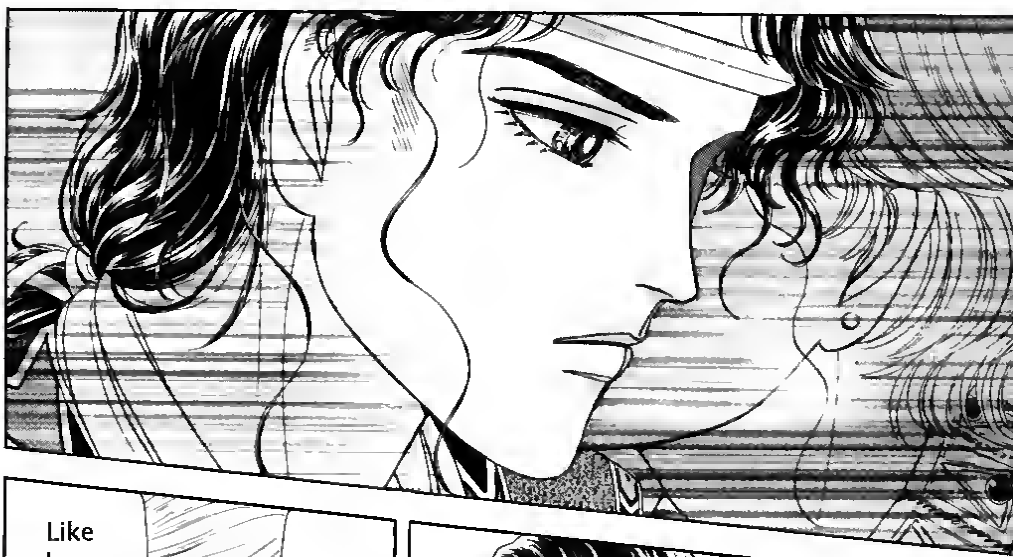
And here I was planning to drink you under the table...
I'm an idiot... How could I go down first?
Hee ey!
Aren't you even a little drunk!?
So sleepy ...
MURR
んにゃ～

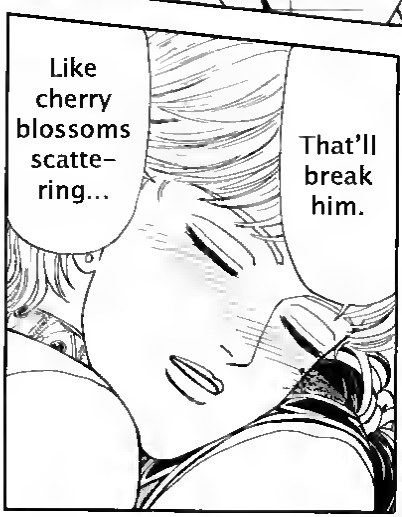
You don't even hate me...
Poor me...


GIGGLE
You're drunk, huh?
Your ears are just a li'l red.

Aha!


...those cute li'l ears...
Maybe I'll tell...




Like cherry blossoms scatte-ring...
That'll break him.

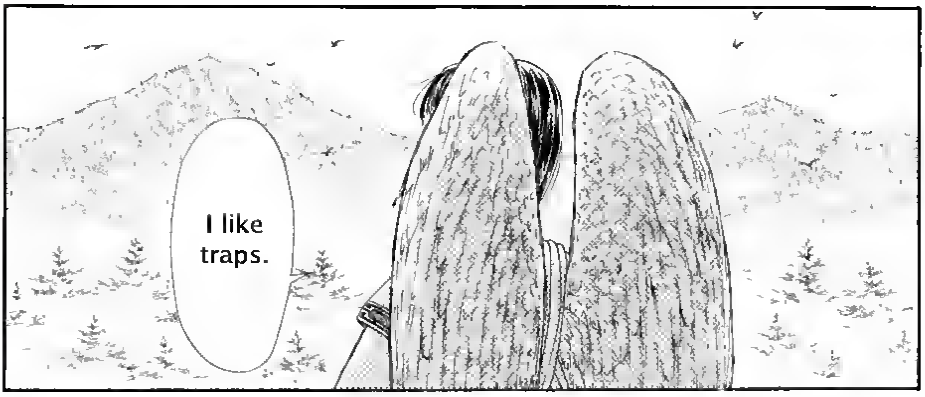
AH HA HA HA
あはは

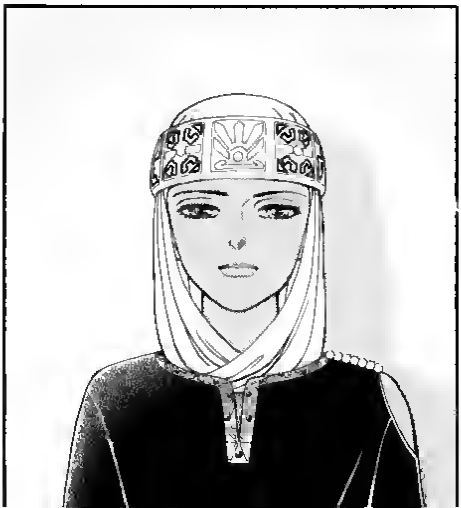
I'll play with him like a doll, torment him like a doll...
When his mind is gone, maybe I'll take 'im.
I won't allow it...
But you can't...
A lovely double sui-cide...
I... won'... let...

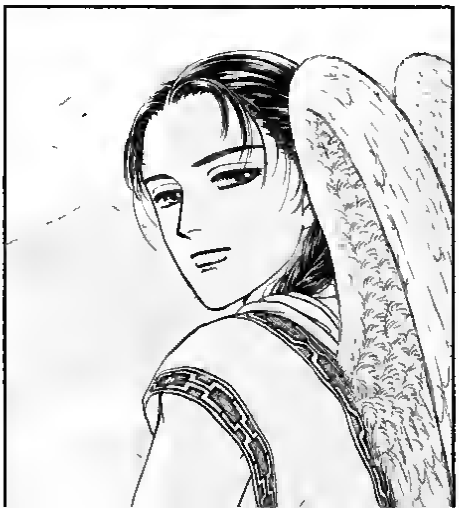
On the night when the moon shines brightest, your soul will probably abandon its body and depart for the heavens
Severing all bonds...

I won't allow it...
...I won't let you.

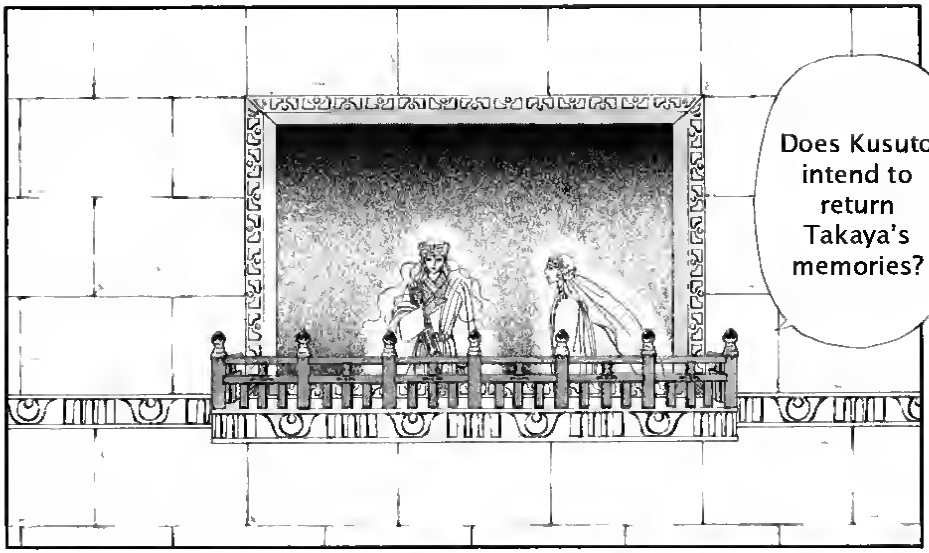
This may be a trap.

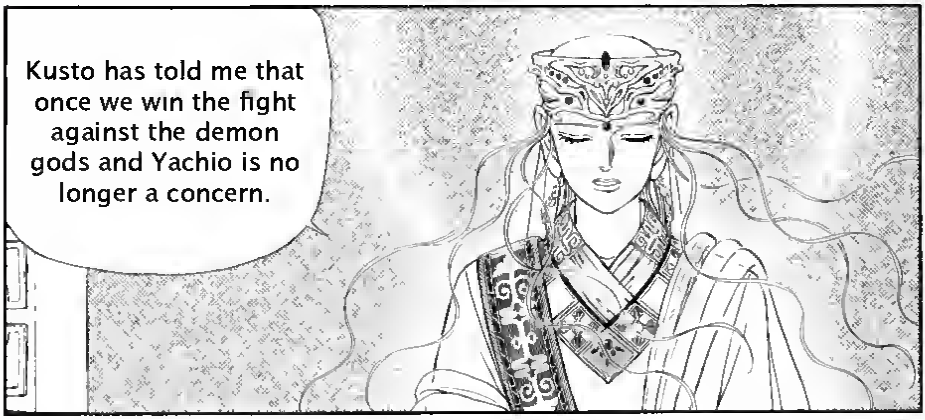

I like traps.





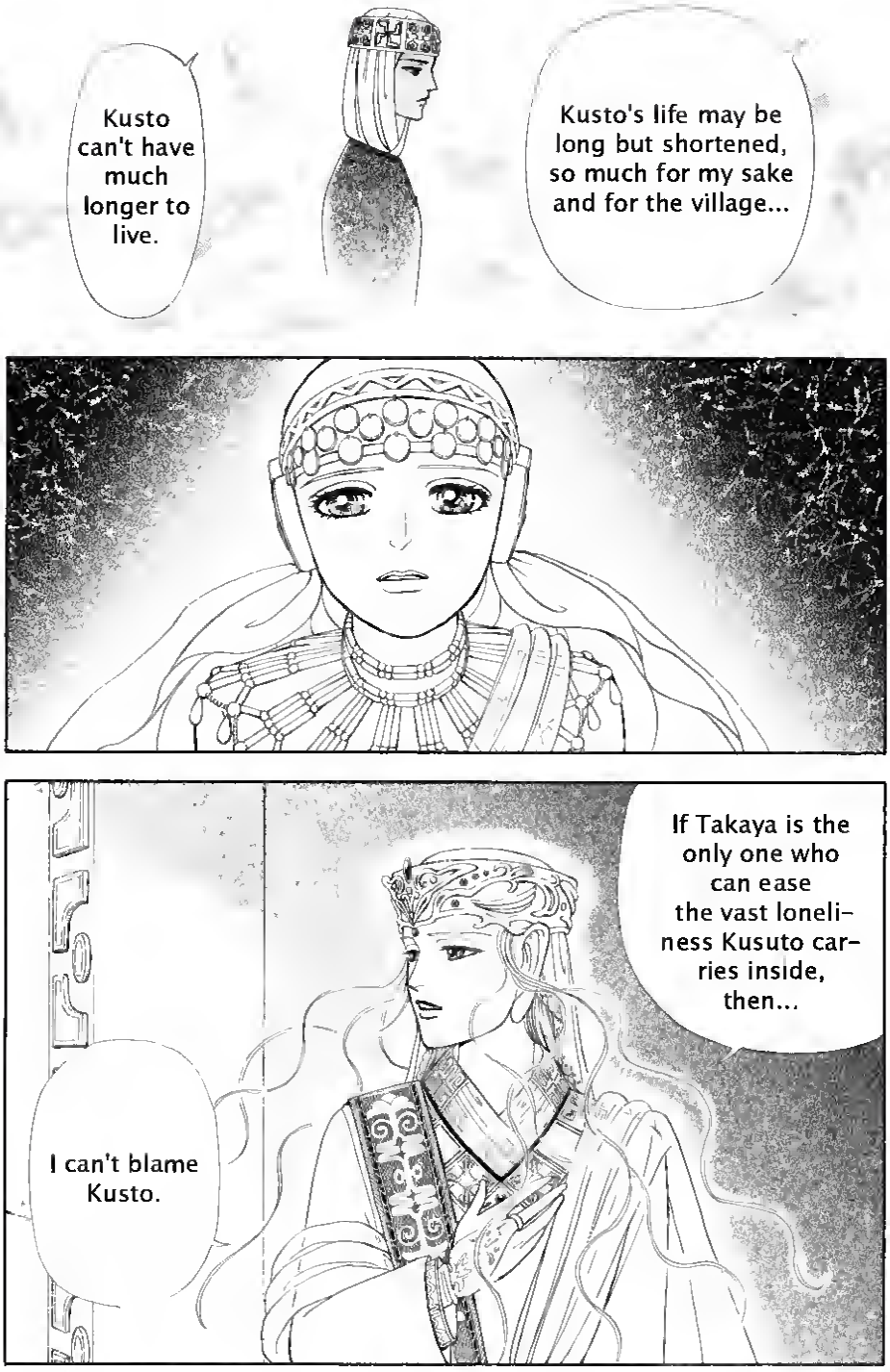
We have to bring about Lord Amane's reign as soon as possible, and create a world where people can live in peace...
At any rate, we have to destroy the demon gods. Every last one...
Just that?
That is what you were born to do.
Underestimate them, and you may die...
Be careful...

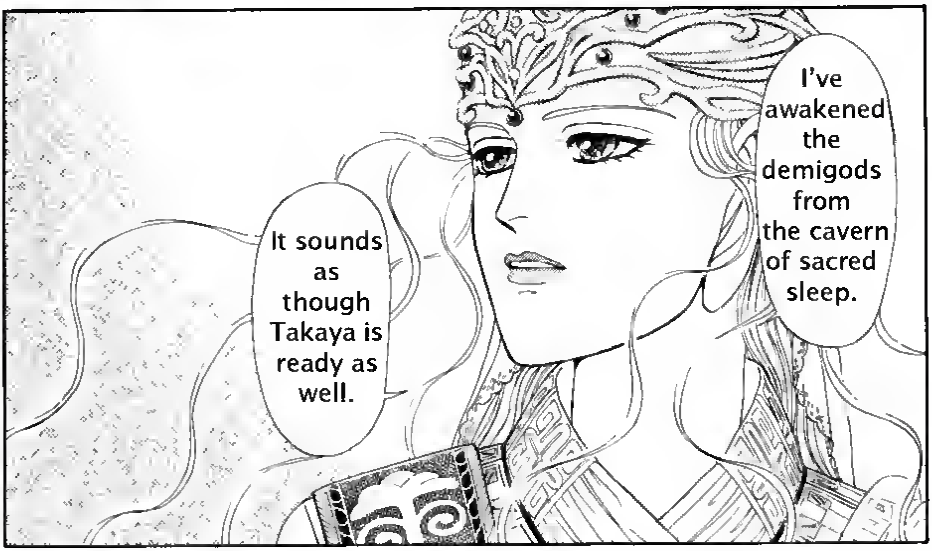

Does Kusuto intend to return Takaya's memories?

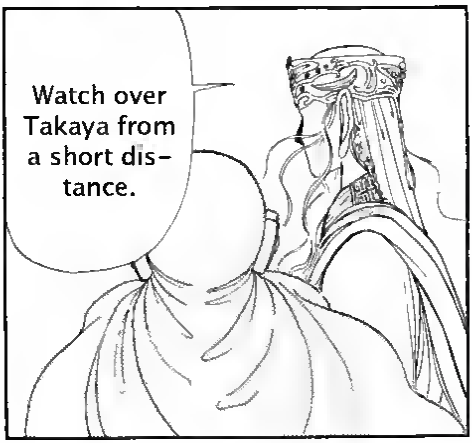

Kusto has told me that once we win the fight against the demon gods and Yachio is no longer a concern.

In the village, I observed human life very closely.
Nothing is more complex or difficult to fathom than human hearts.

...and "good" is that which protects it and helps it thrive.
To living things, "evil" is whatever annihilates their species...
With romantic love in particu-lar, good and evil are...
Love...
Kusuto thinks of love that way, too.
Kusto has done very well for us.
Lord Amane, that's...


Kusto can't have much longer to live.
Kusto's life may be long but shortened, so much for my sake and for the village...
If Takaya is the only one who can ease the vast loneliness Kusuto carries inside, then...
I can't blame Kusto.





I'll be on my way.

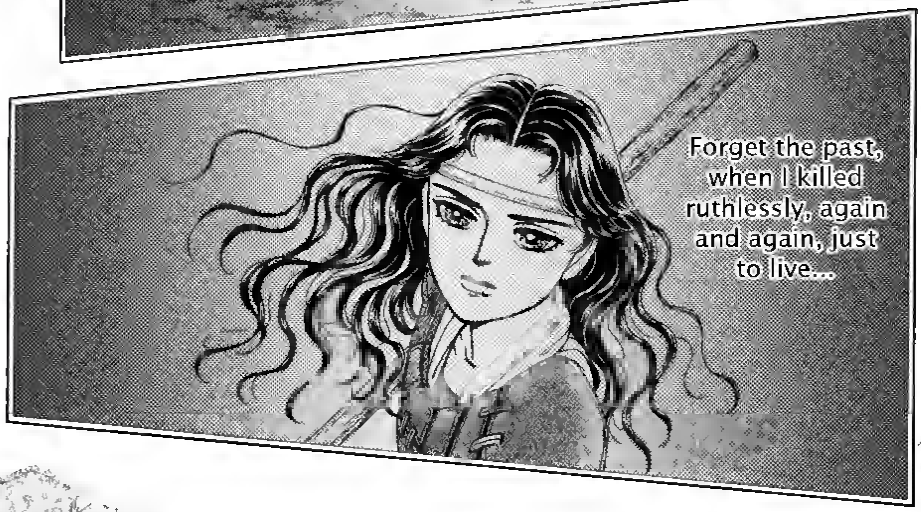
I believe in him...

He won't lose to any demon god.
Takaya is strong.

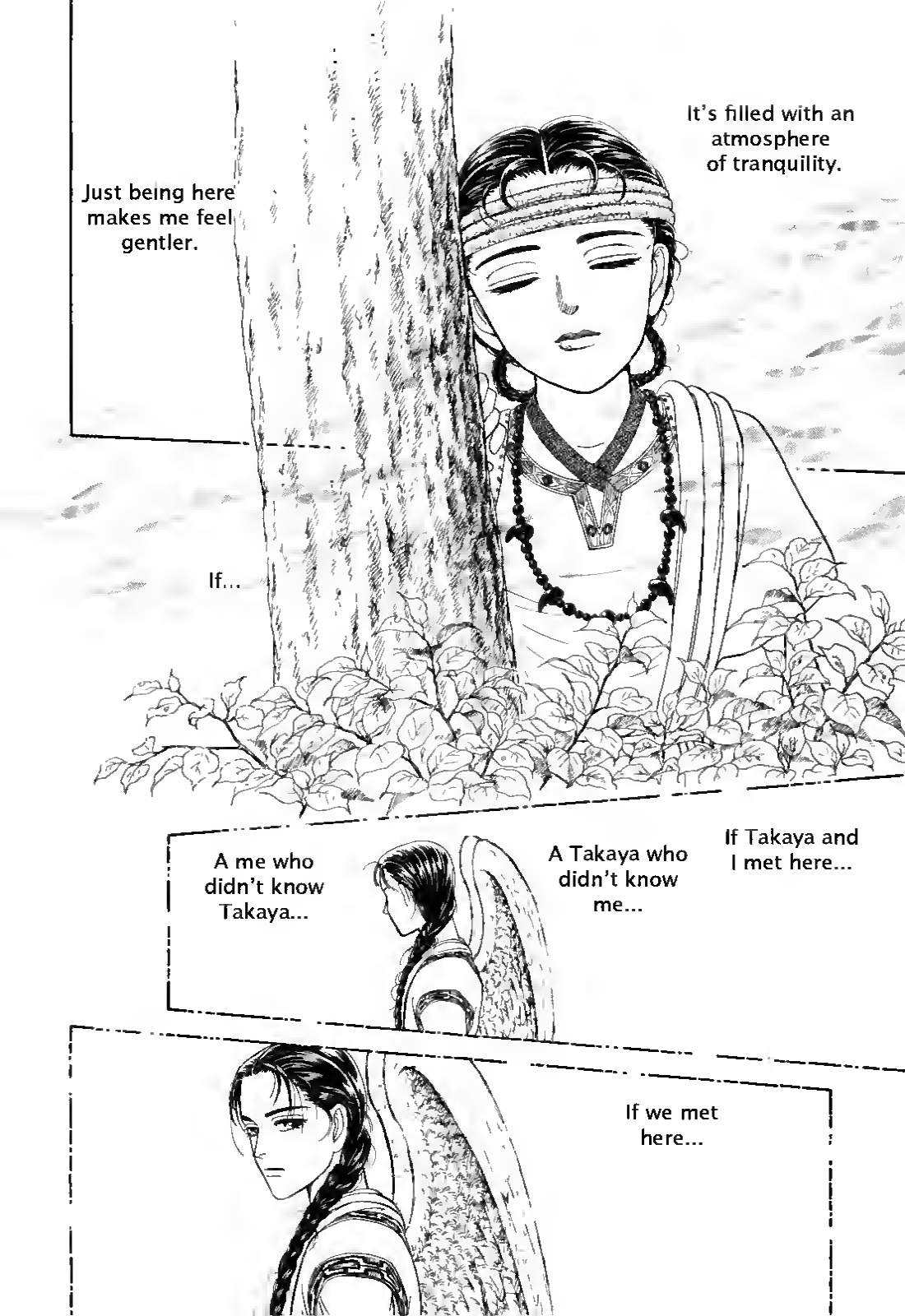
AH HA HA HA HA
キャキャキャ

I'm sure...

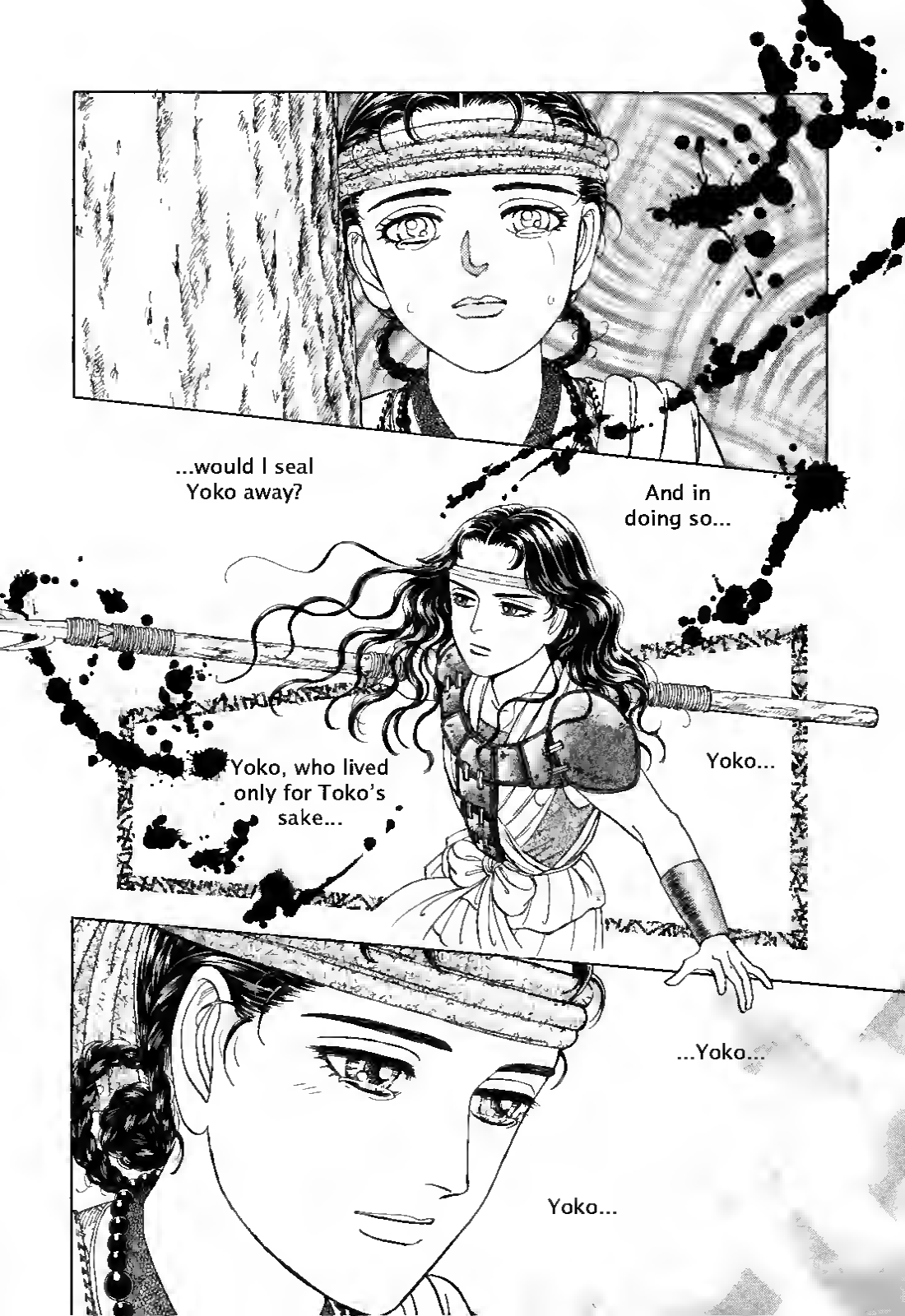
Forget that my hands are stained with blood...
Deep down, I want to forget, too.

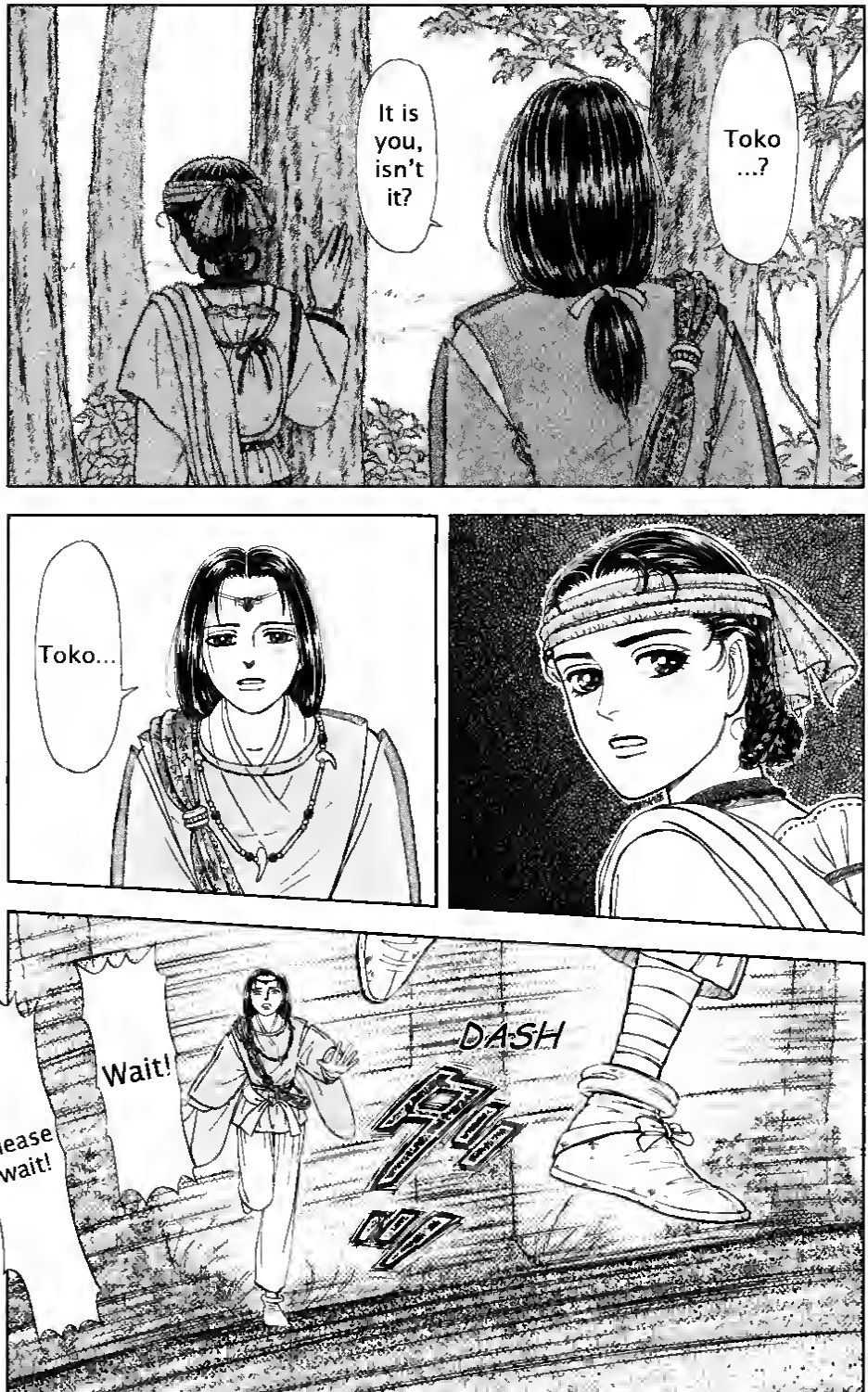

Forget the past, when I killed ruthlessly, again and again, just to live...

This place...


It's filled with an atmosphere of tranquility.
Just being here makes me feel gentler.
If...
A me who didn't know Takaya...
A Takaya who didn't know me...
If Takaya and I met here...
If we met here...

We wouldn't...
...be siblings anymore...
If we met... If I fell in love with Takaya again...
If he loved me again...


...would I seal Yoko away?
And in doing so...
Yoko, who lived only for Toko's sake...
Yoko...
...Yoko...
Yoko...

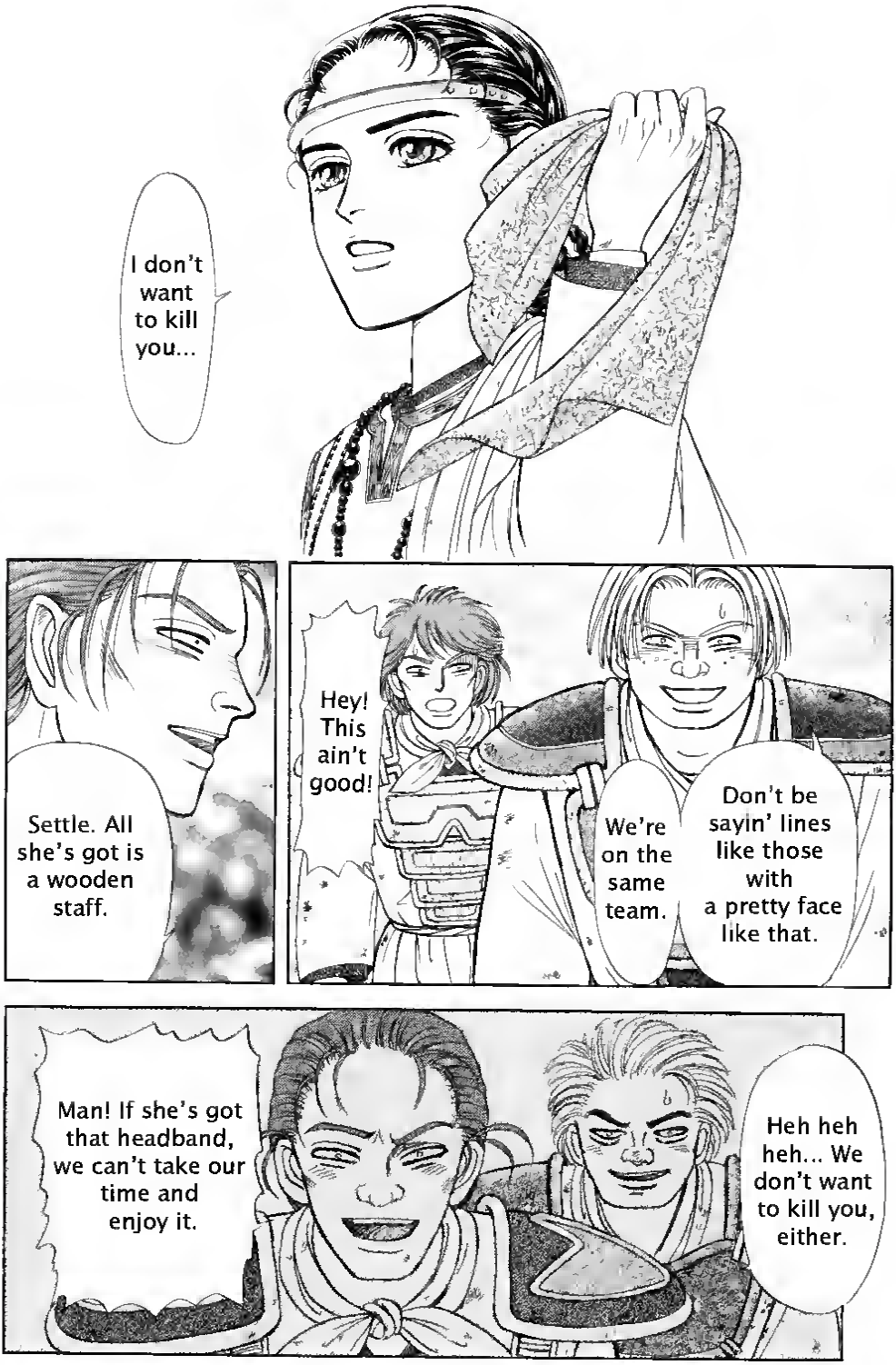

It is you, isn't it?
Toko ...?
Toko...
Please wait!
Wait!
DASH

She's no mere human!
I didn't notice her there!
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
Was that Lady Sarai...?
A scream!?
GASP

HEH
HEH
H... Honey ...
HEH HEH HEH
HEH HEH HEH
Too bad. This's as far as you go.
The guy or the lady?
Who wants to die first?
Too bad. That's as far as you go.
Who're you!?

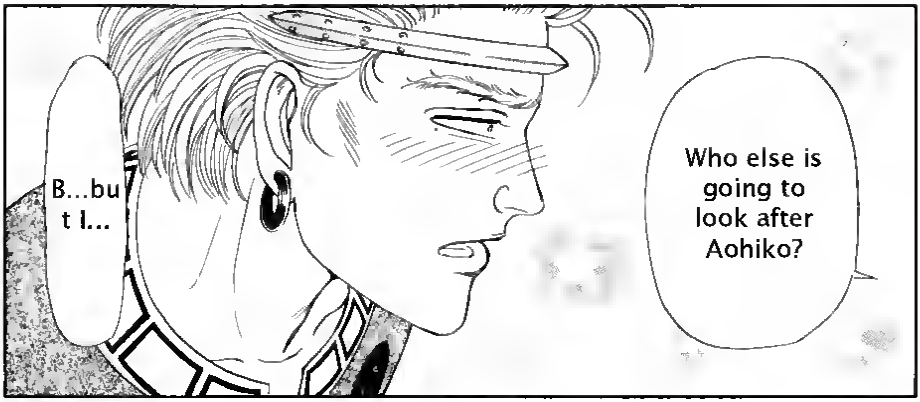
Leave at once!
I don't plan to kill you, though.
Hey, cutie!
Now there's a fine illusion!
WH OO EE!
Go!
B... but...
Hurry and go!

I am a warrior of Kiyu, the Silver Horned God.
How old are ya, girlie?
This just got fun♪
SWISH
Whoa!
A demon head-band!


I don't want to kill you...
Settle. All she's got is a wooden staff.
Hey! This ain't good!
We're on the same team.
Don't be sayin' lines like those with a pretty face like that.
Man! If she's got that headband, we can't take our time and enjoy it.
Heh heh heh... We don't want to kill you, either.

What a waste ...
You said it.
We're gonna have to kill her fast.
We'll carve you up after we kill you!

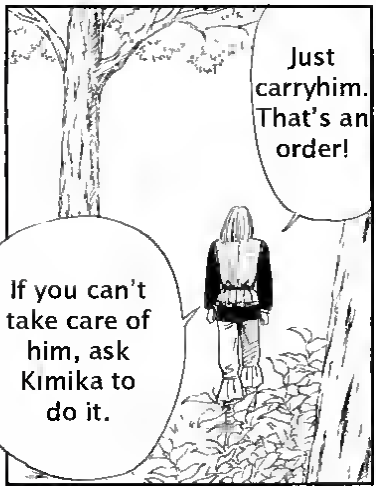
D...did that scroll I stole do this?
Calm down. He's not dead.
C-Cap-tain ...
What'll I do? What if he doesn't wake up?
I don't know how long he'll be gone, but he will come back.
The power of the yang stones doesn't harm people.
Me?
Don't just stand there, carry him!
Not today!
Put a little water in his mouth from time to time.
Some-day, Aohiko's gonna...
You say that, but...

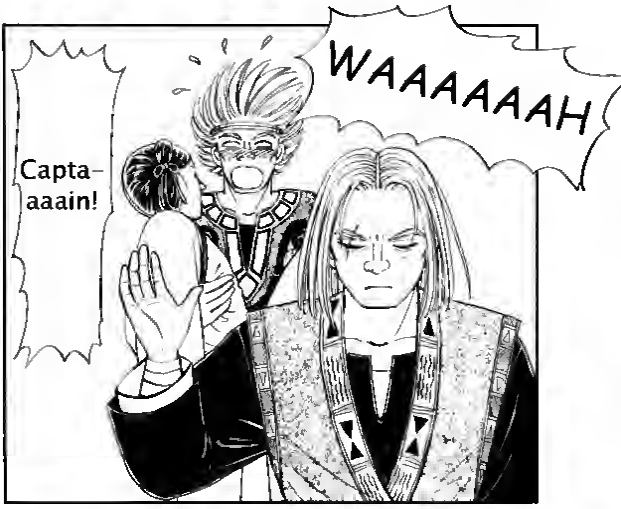

B...bu
t I...
Who else is going to look after Aohiko?

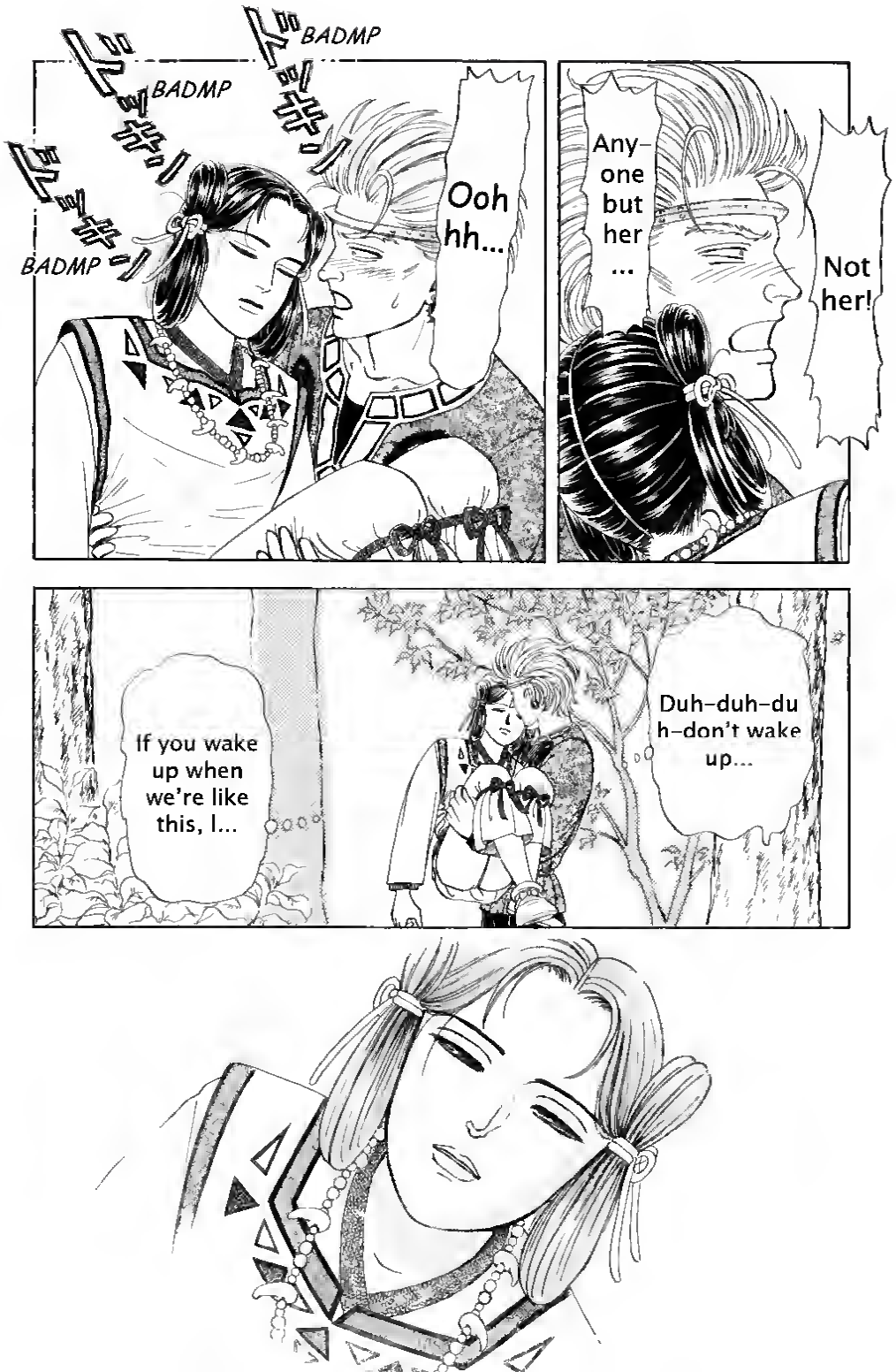
Huh?

Put out your hands!

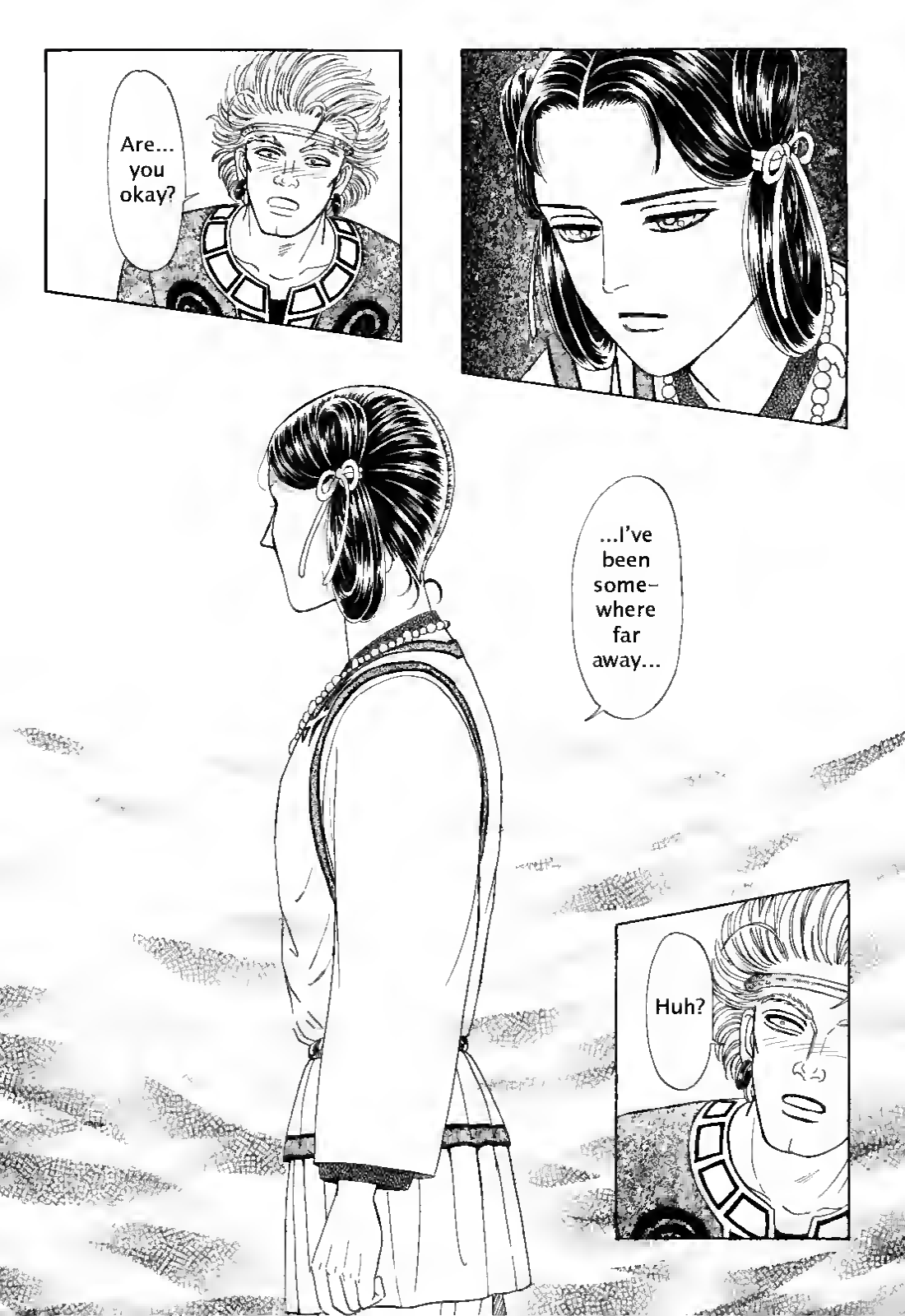
...
I...
I can't touch Aohiko ...


Just carryhim. That's an order!
If you can't take care of him, ask Kimika to do it.


WAAAAAAH
Capta-aaain!


BADMP
BADMP
BADMP
BADMP
Ooh hh...
Any-one but her ...
Not her!
If you wake up when we're like this, I...
Duh-duh-duh-don't wake up...

AH
AH
AH
AH
FWUMP...
I'm sorry...
It looks like I've caused you trou-ble...
Nuh... no... No trou-ble...


Are... you okay?
...I've been some-where far away...
Huh?

When was it...?
That's all I can say.
When Toko was little, and she resonated with the bead necklace...
That was what she said...
"I've been somewhere far away..."

You won't get away with this!
Arrrgh!

Could it be the yin stones? I can't move as well as before...
WHEW

CLANK

I couldn't have let even those two get away.
If I'd gotten hurt...
As long as I have it... I'll keep killing people...
The demon headband protected Yoko, but...

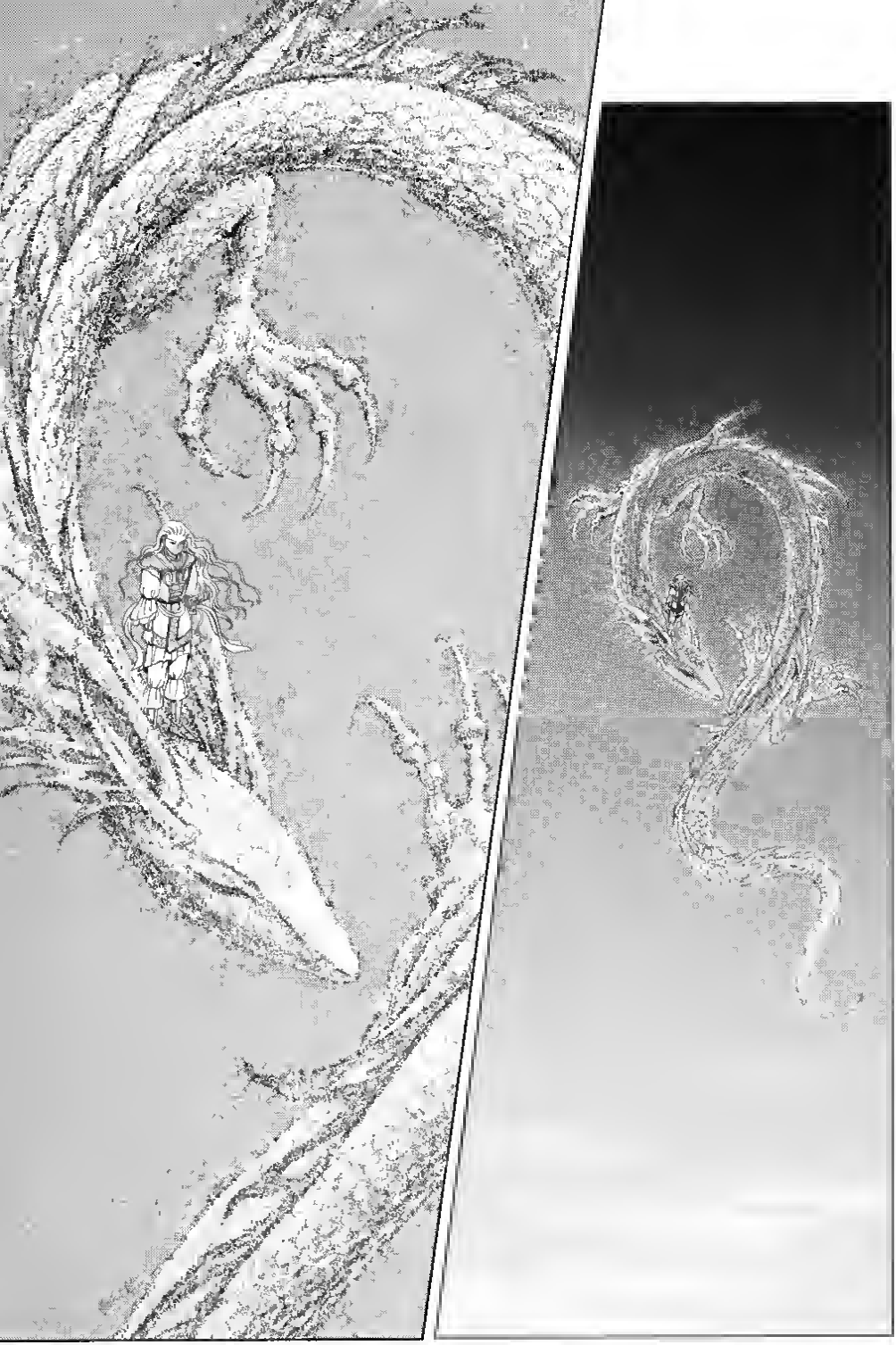
It sets the inside of my head tingling.

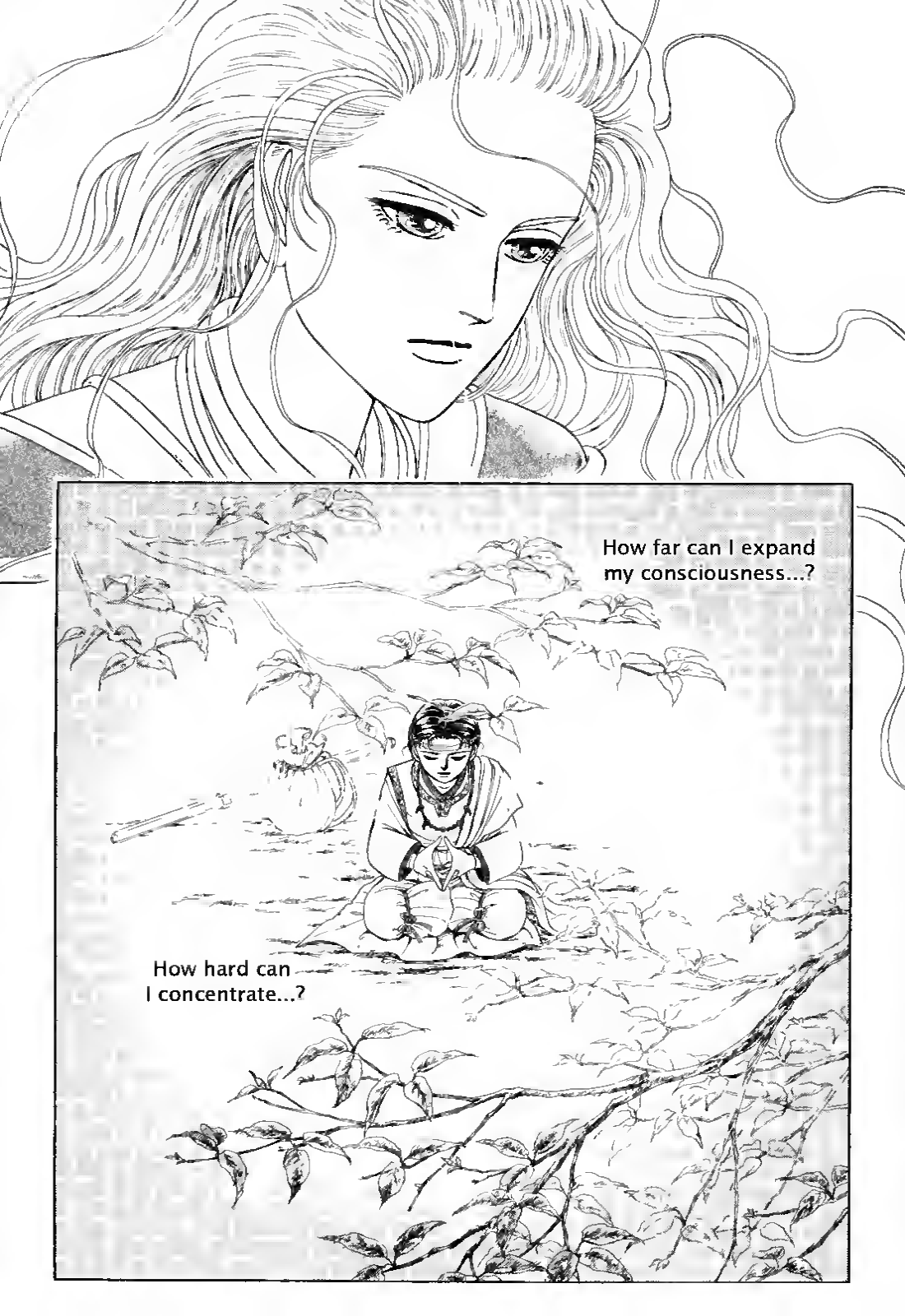
I can't escape from that ecstasy.

As long as I have this, I'll scatter lives with my own hands.

Yin stones...
With these yin stones...
I might be able to do it...
Eventually, it will return to dust.
But if you turn it into dust through your own strength...

That would be much too dangerous.
Too danger-ous...
I wonder if my head will fly apart...



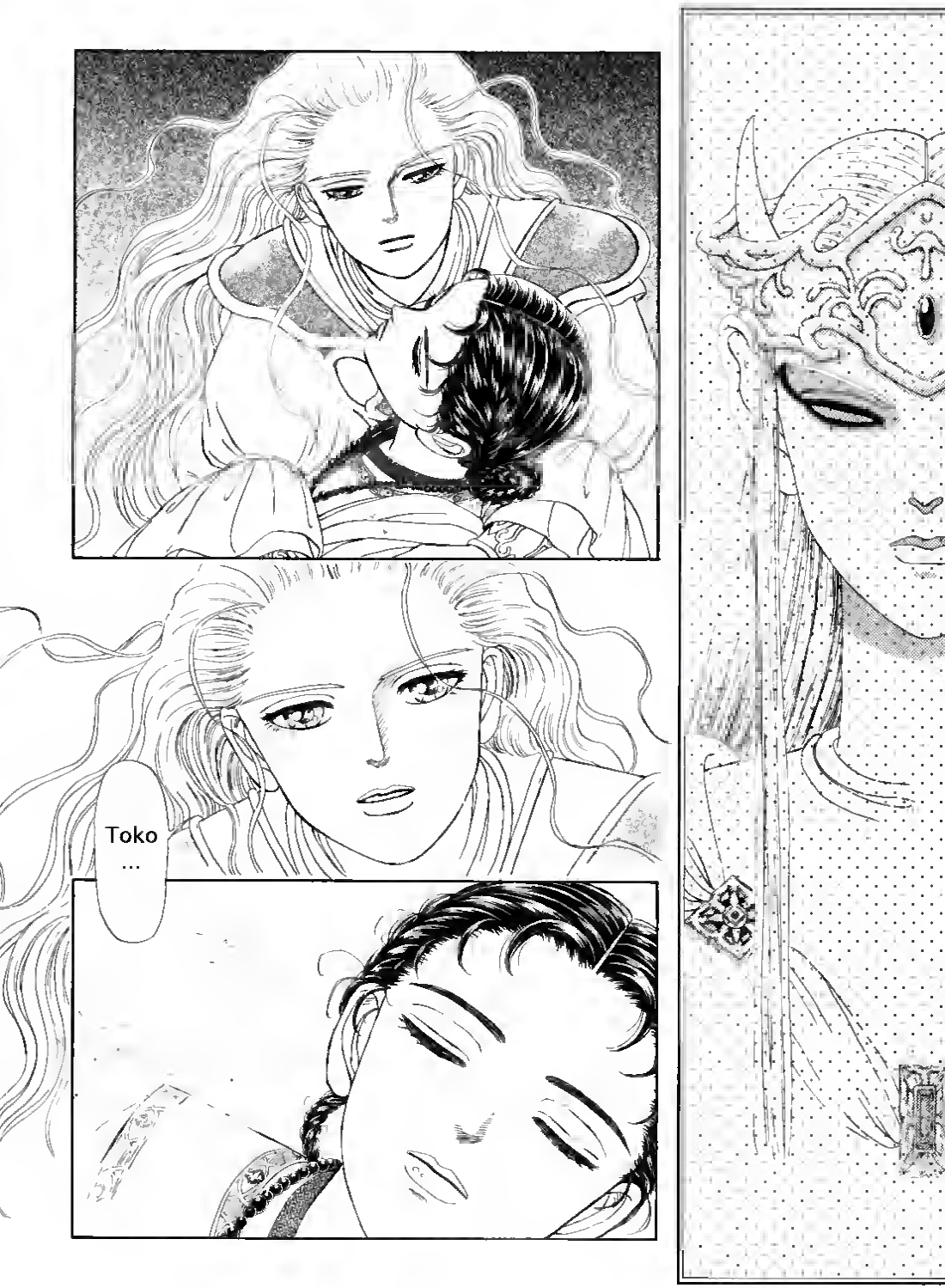

How far can I expand my consciousness...?
How hard can I concentrate...?

Especially with the yin stone mantra...
I'm okay, aren't I?
I remember it, don't I?
HAAAH FUUU
When I chant the tones of the mantra, I have to express these two conflicting minds over the sounds simultaneously.
If I can't even do this, then I have no right to take back Takaya.
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
A mistake will cost much more than my life...
Calm down!

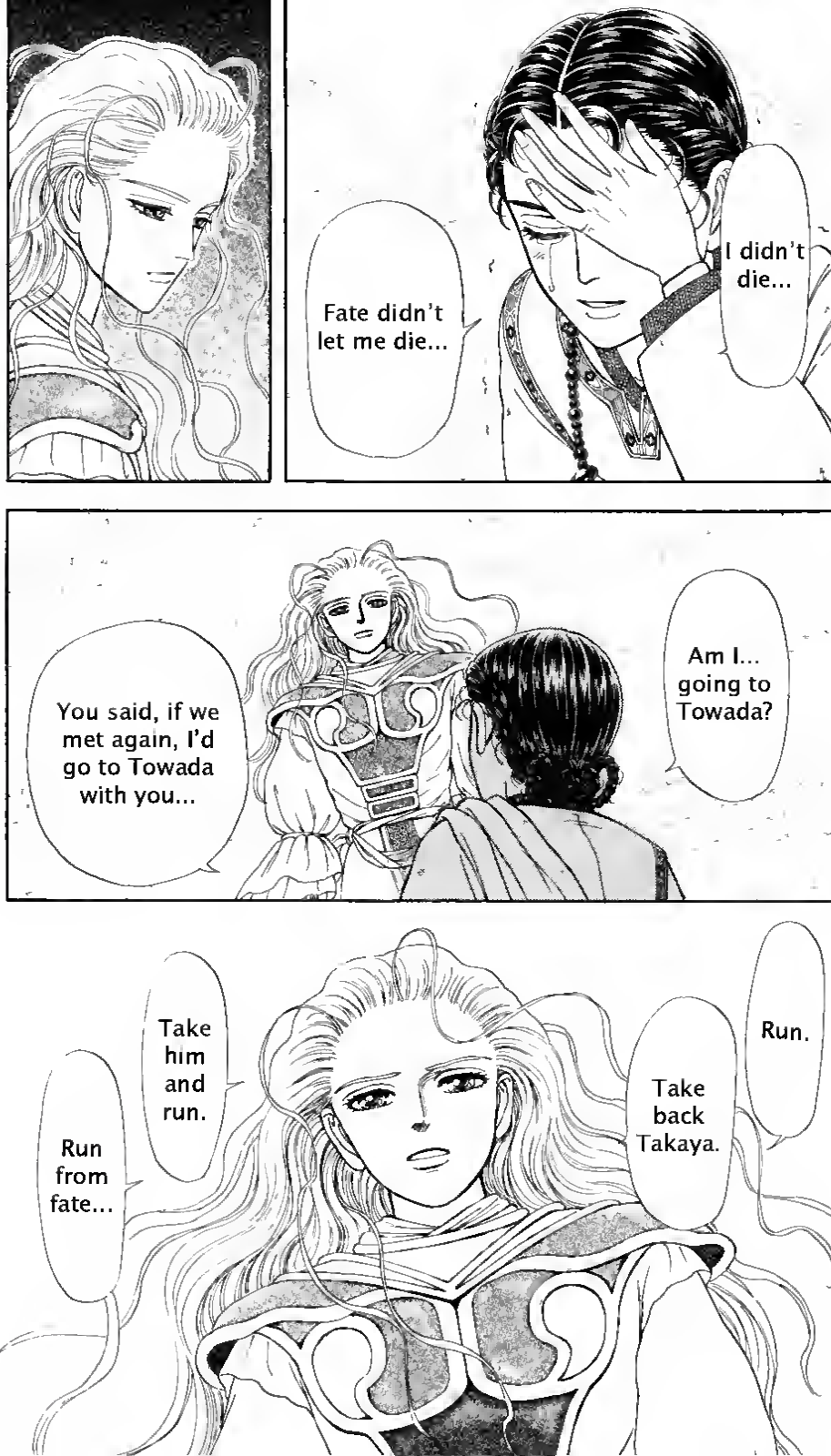
Fate...
If you need me...

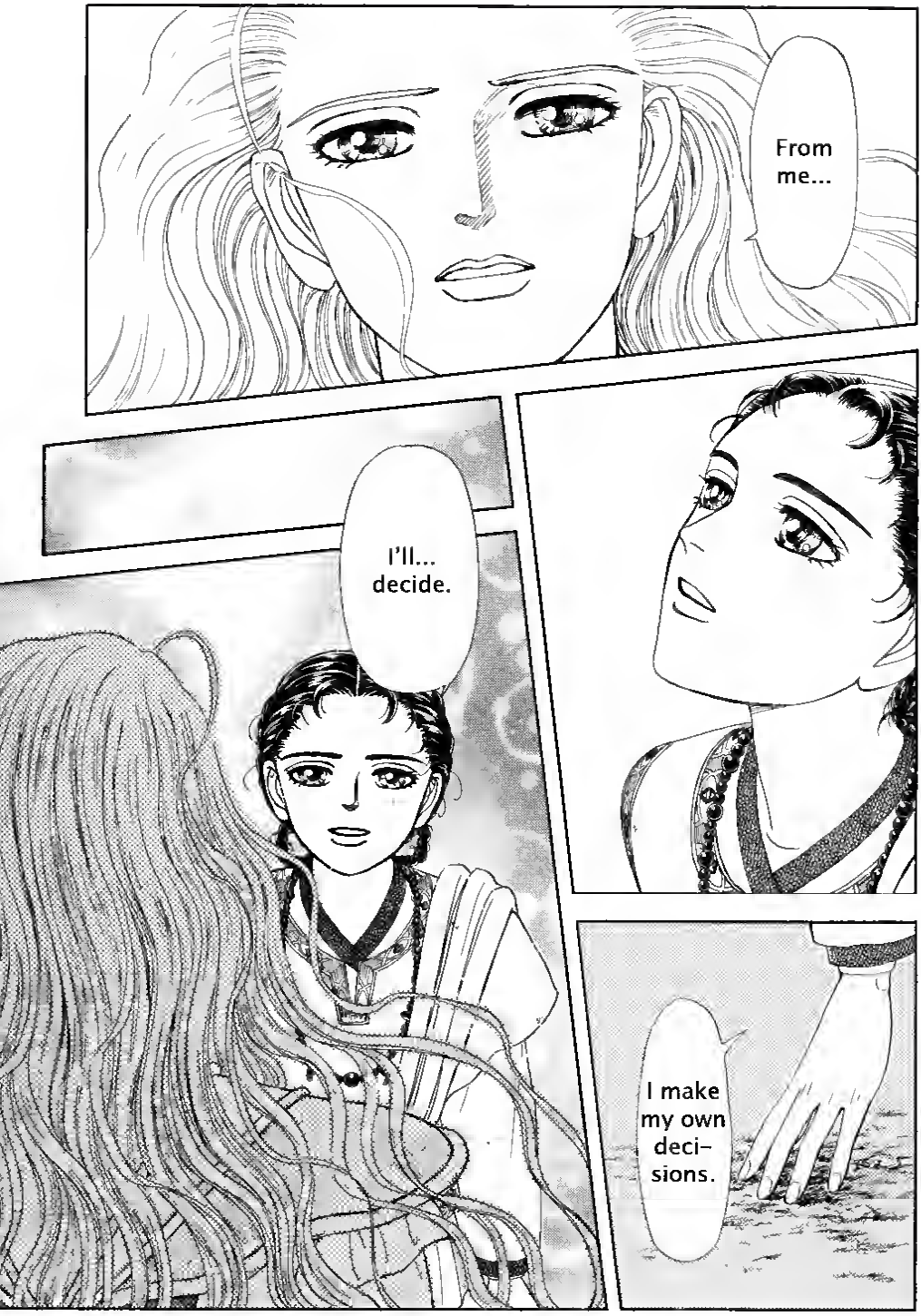
Let me live!

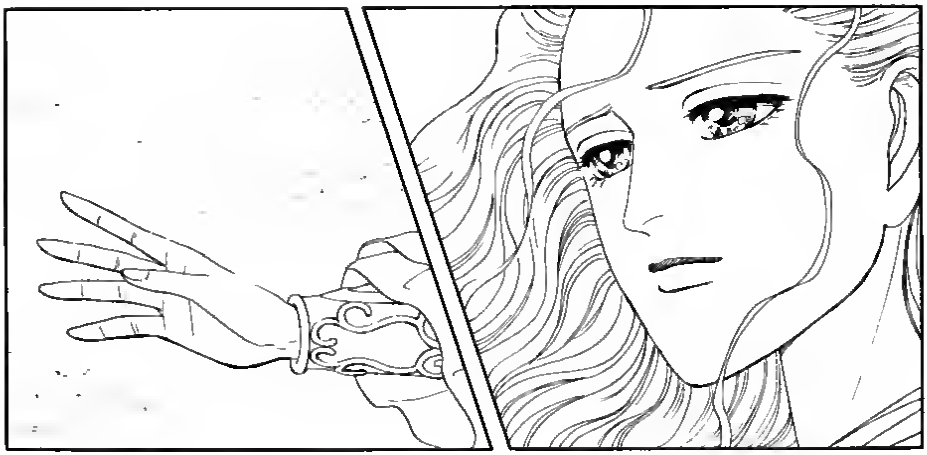
KRIK

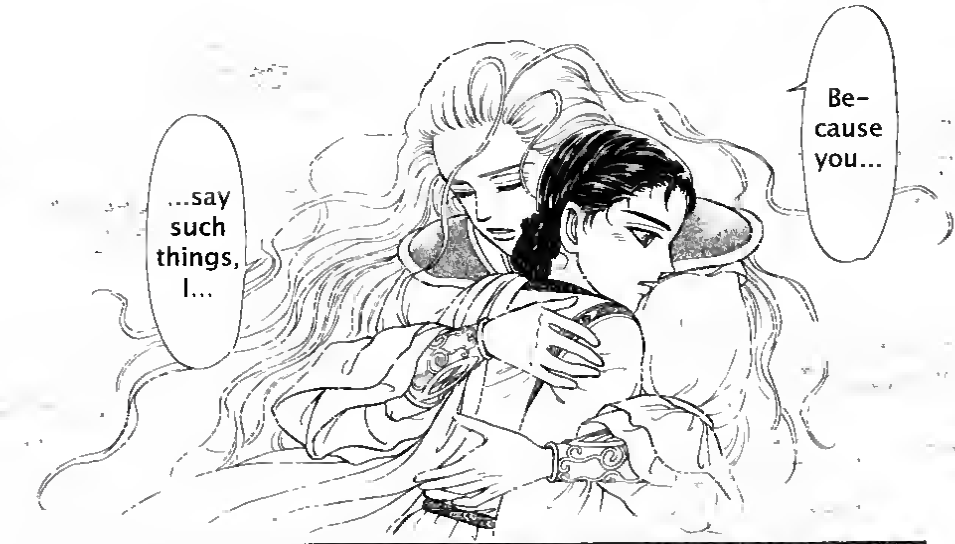

Toko
...

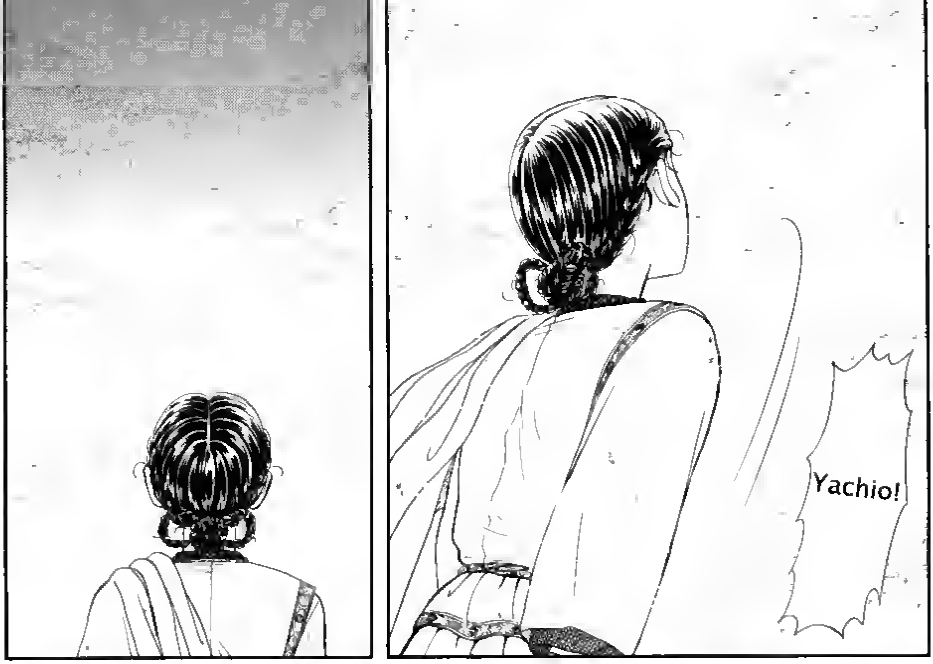
I never dreamed it would be one as young as you.
I was told that the first person I spoke with would be the one I was meant to meet... but...
As Toko ...
...and Yoko ...
Still, you've already lived twice your life...
I...

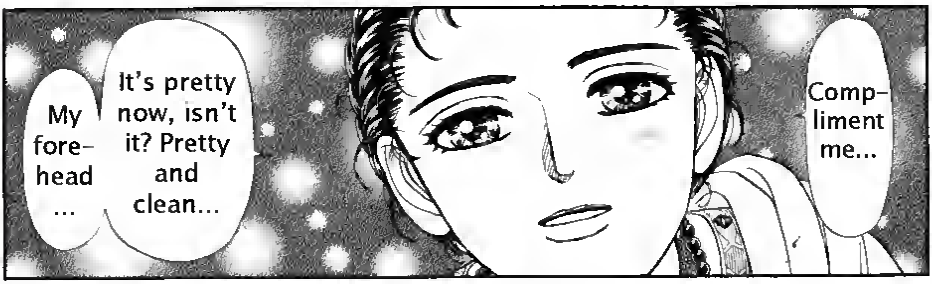

I didn't die...
Fate didn't let me die...
Am I... going to Towada?
You said, if we met again, I'd go to Towada with you...
Run.
Take back Takaya.
Take him and run.
Run from fate...

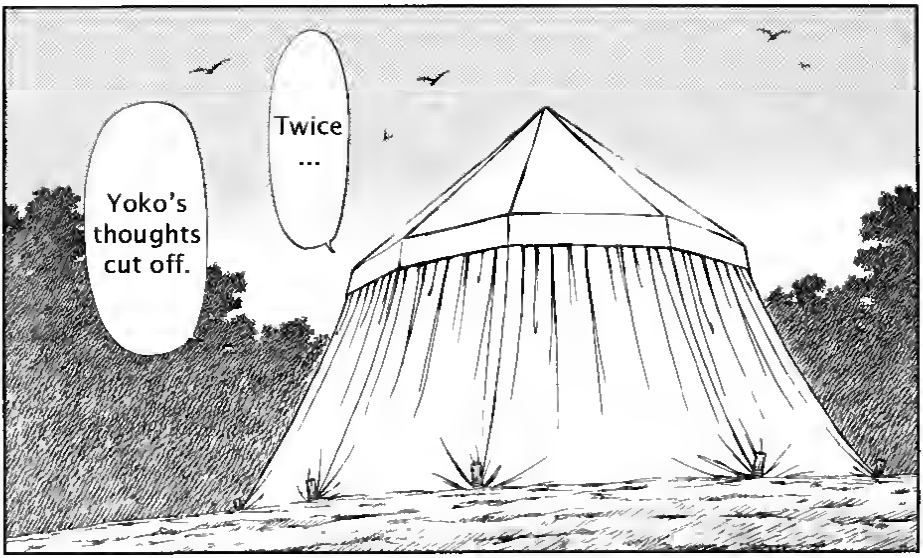

From me...
I'll... decide.
I make my own deci-sions.

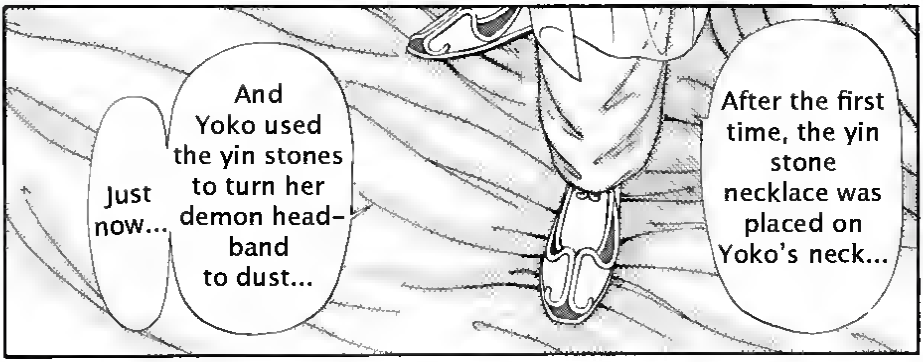



...say such things, I...
Be-cause you...


Yachio!

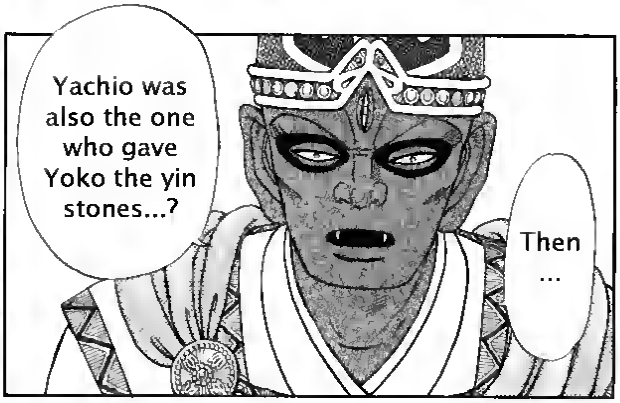

My fore-head ...
It's pretty now, isn't it? Pretty and clean...
Comp-liment me...

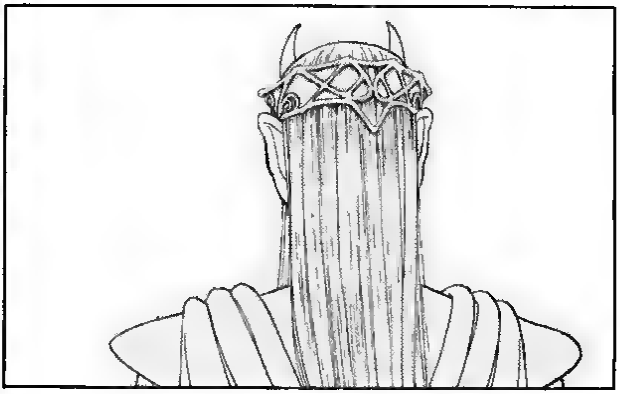

Twice ...
Yoko's thoughts cut off.

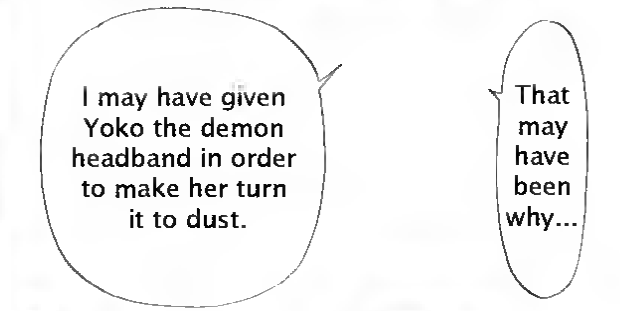

After the first time, the yin stone necklace was placed on Yoko's neck...
And Yoko used the yin stones to turn her demon head-band to dust...
Just now...

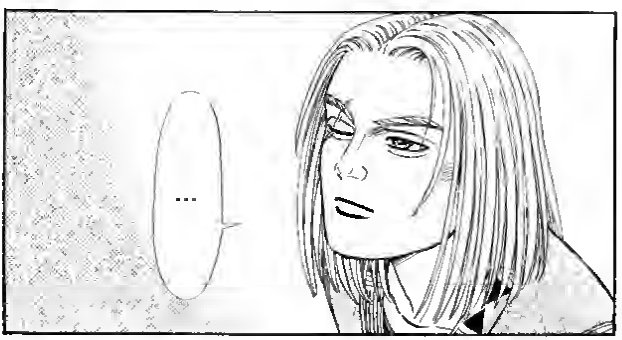
The demon head-band ...
Then Yoko's thoughts cut off once more... only to be filled a moment later...
...by the wave-length known as "Yachio" ...

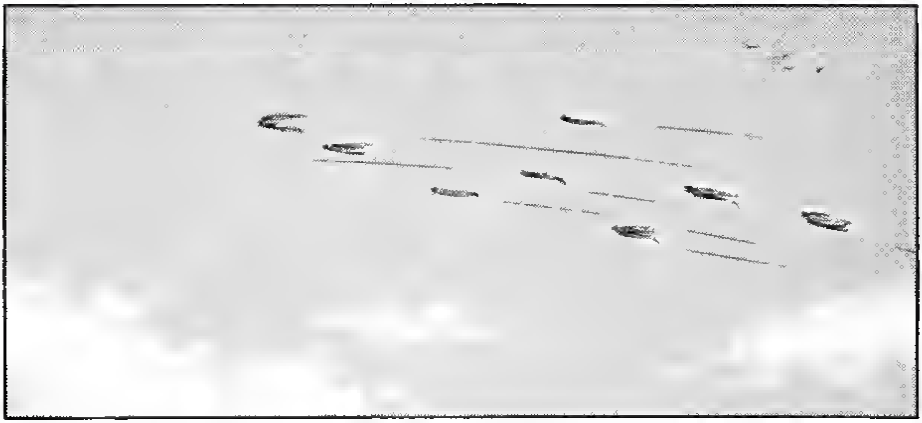
Takaya has reached the coast.

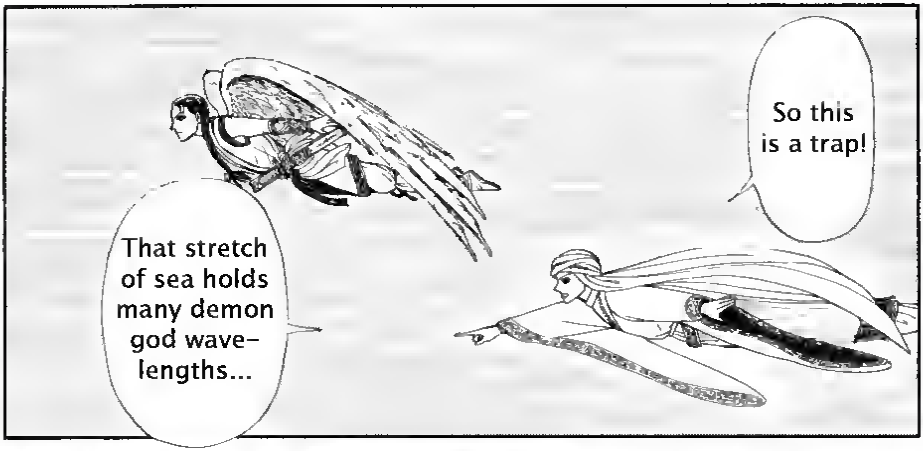

Yachio was also the one who gave Yoko the yin stones...?
Then ...

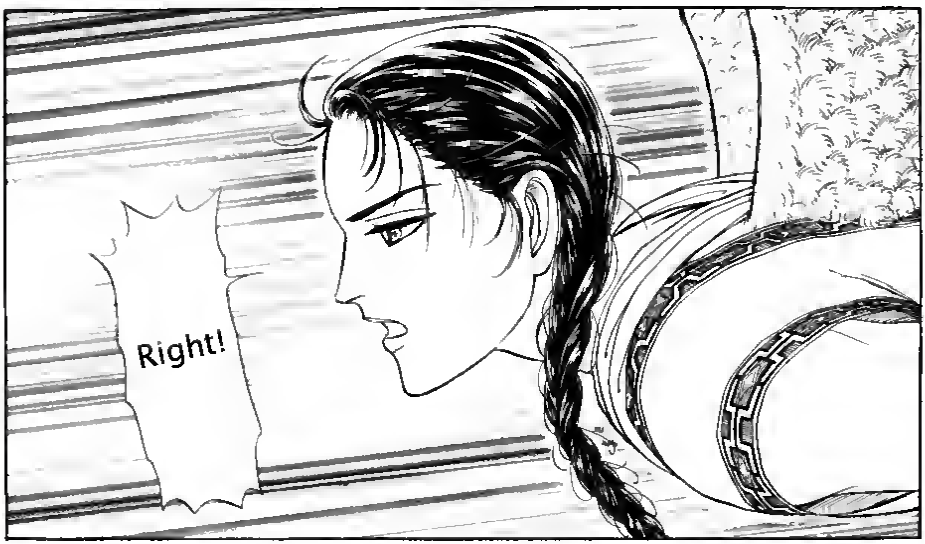


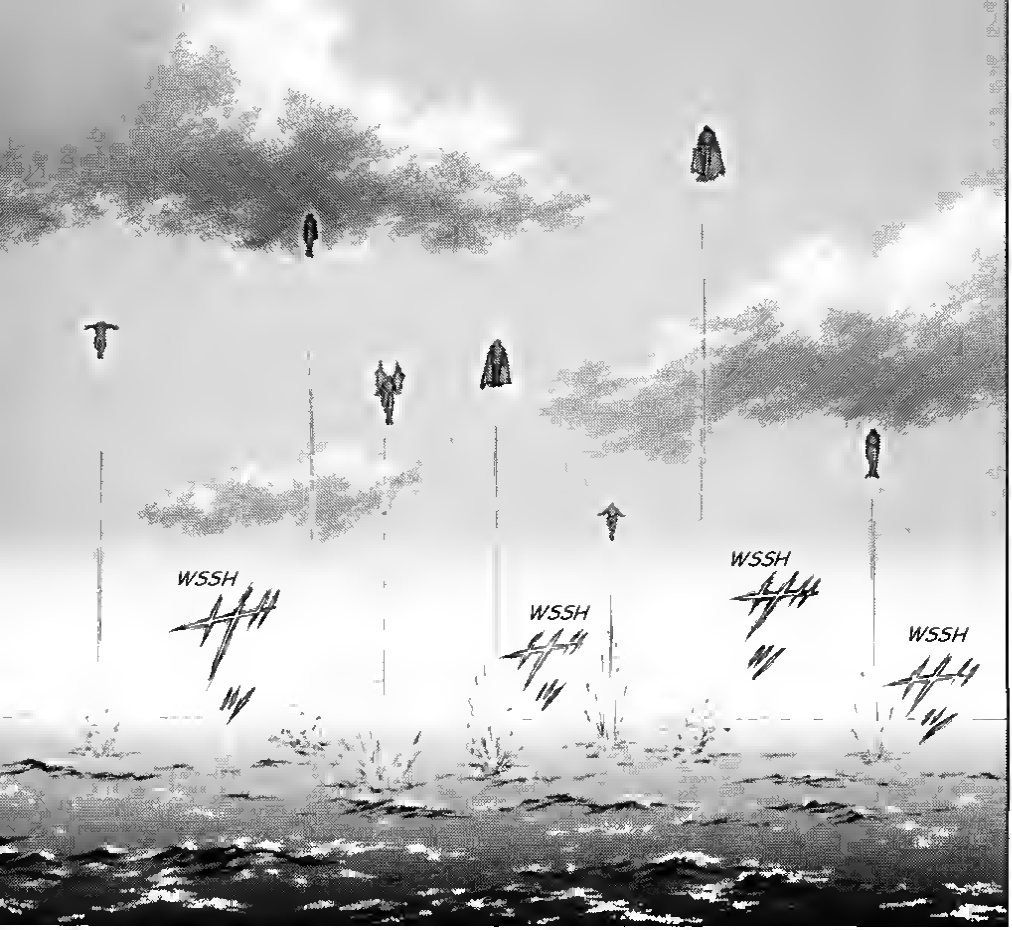

I may have given Yoko the demon headband in order to make her turn it to dust.
That may have been why...


...




That stretch of sea holds many demon god wave-lengths...
So this is a trap!


Right!


WSSH
WSSH
WSSH
WSSH

Vanish, in Lord Amane's name!

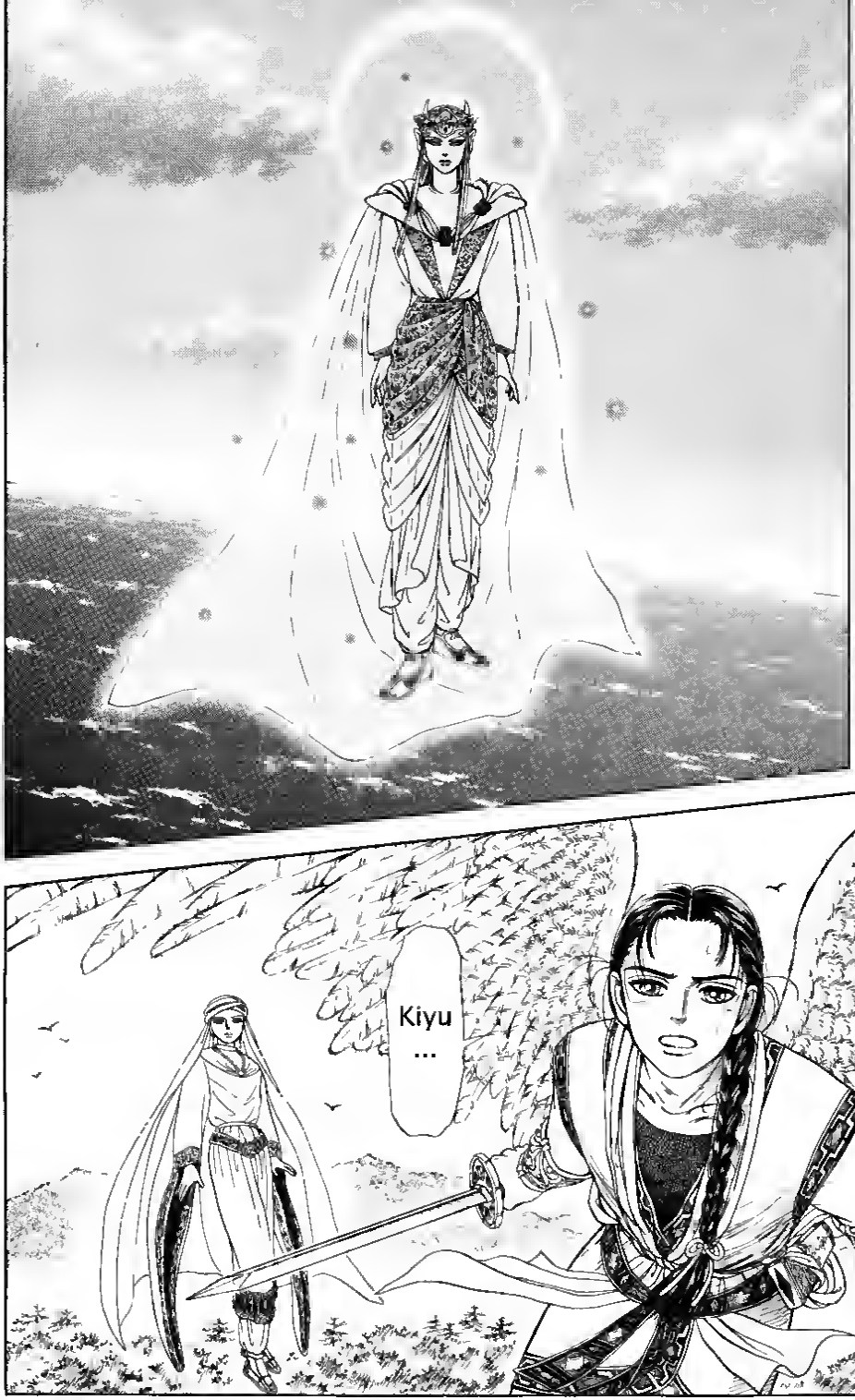
HAA
AAH
SLASH

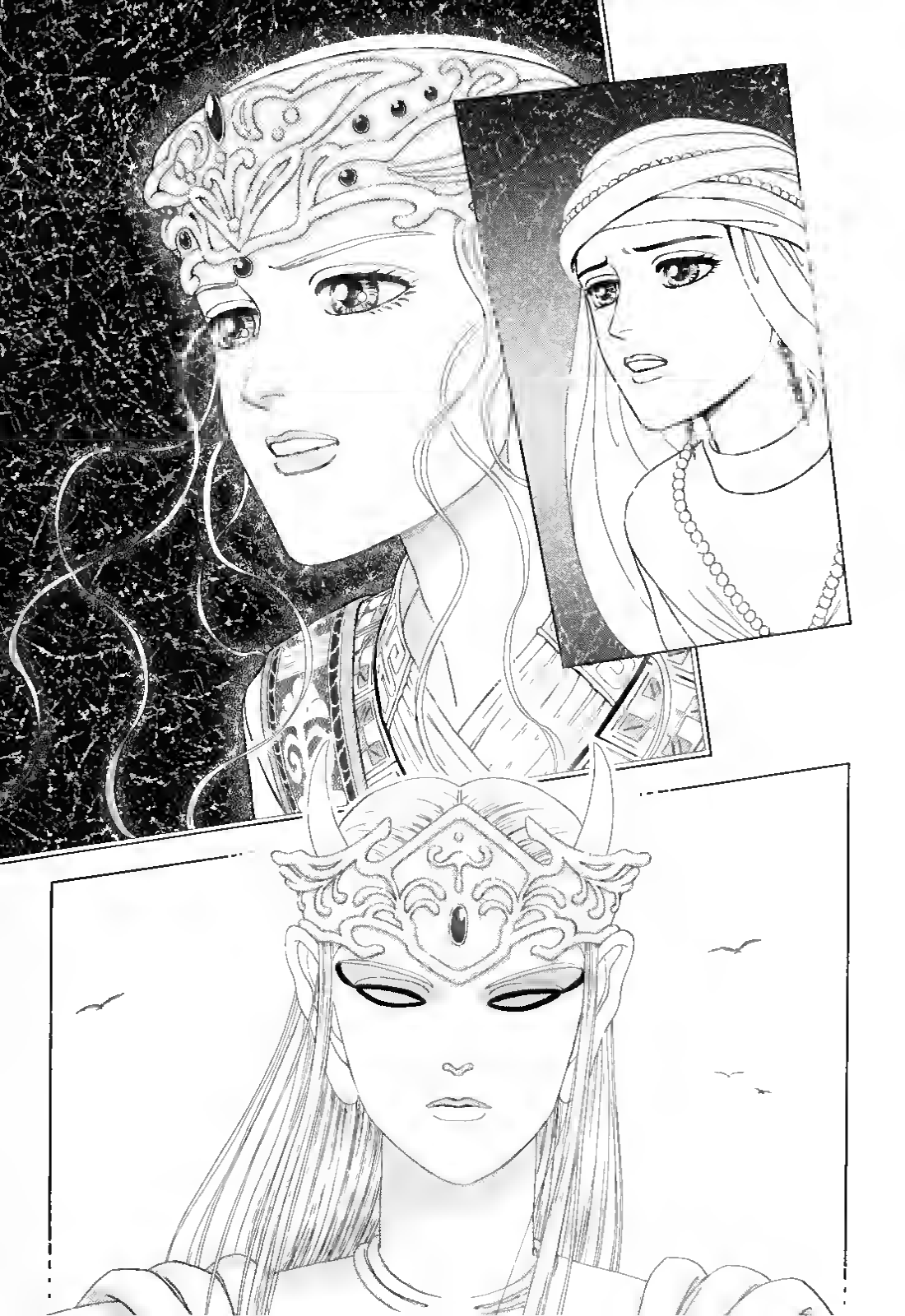
BOOMF
ZZT
FSSSH

SLASH
FSSSH
FSSSH

Lord Kiyu ...
How goes it?
Both sides have three gods left...
No... Only...
L-Lord Kiyu!
Only two left!
All demon gods will disappear!

SLASH
Taka-
ya.
One left!


Kiyu
...



Why...
Why are you here?

Lord Amane ...
Why...
...are you...
...are you...
...here, like that!?

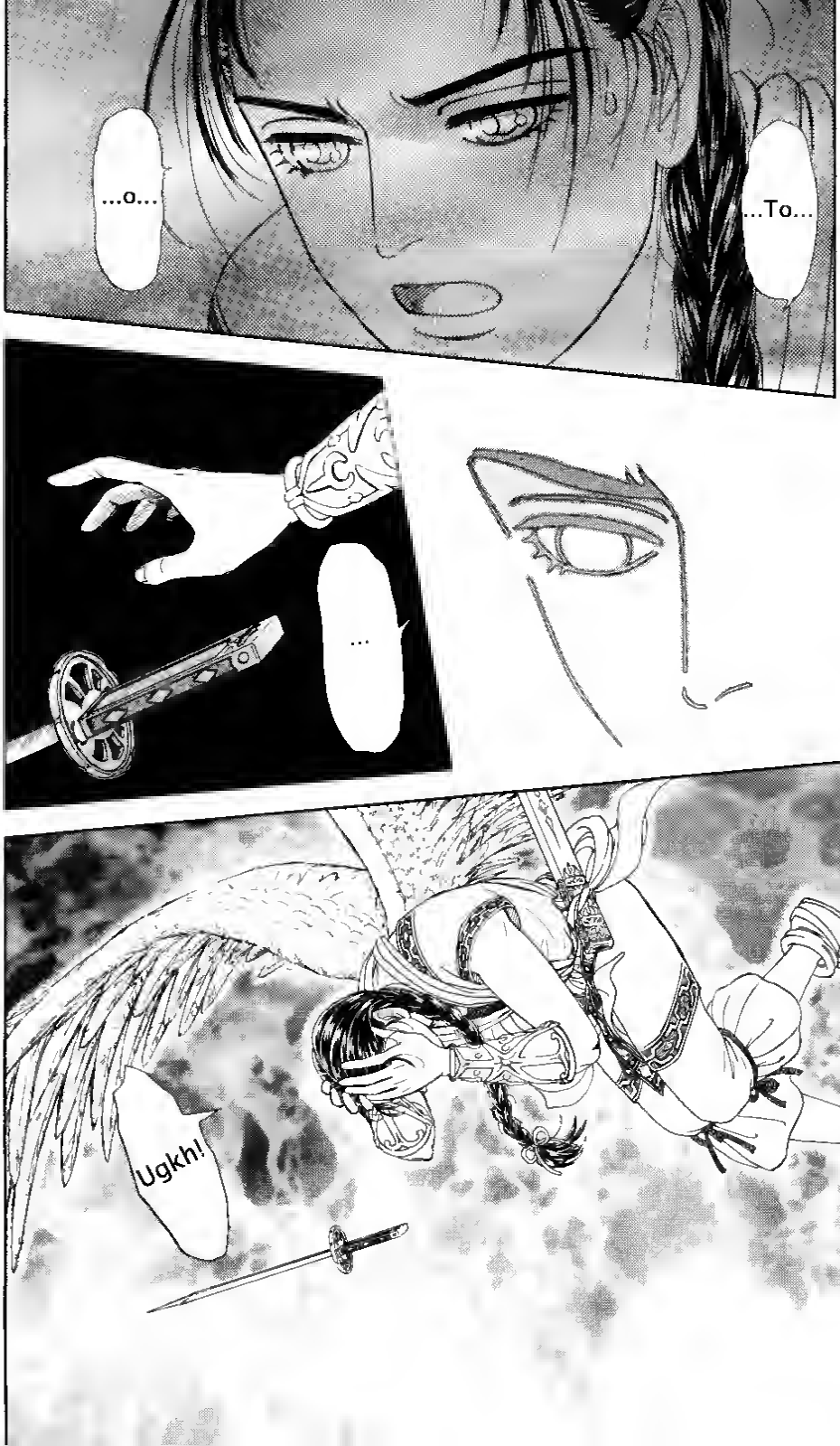
ZZT
FSSSH
Lord Amane!

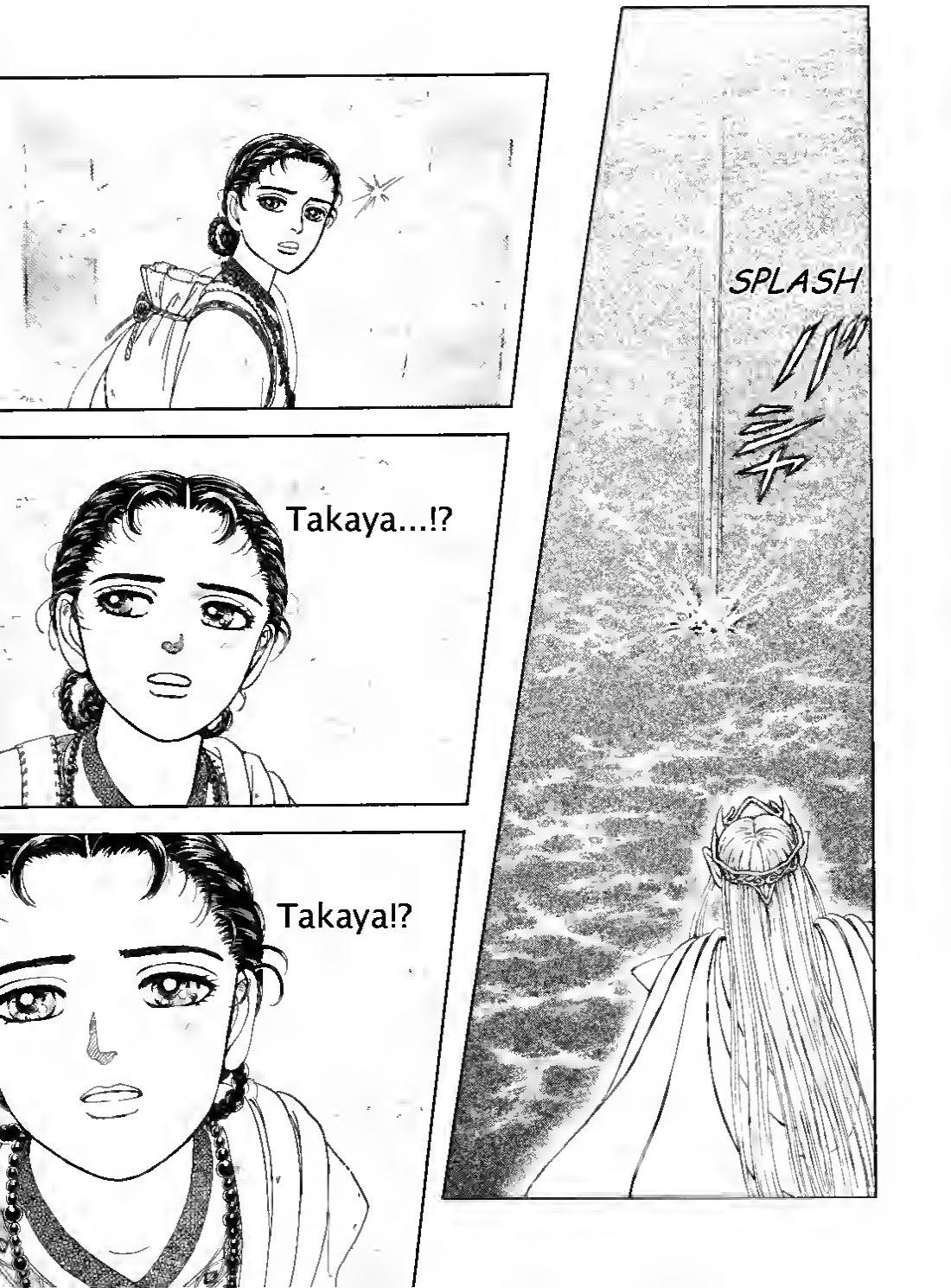
Is it Takaya ...? Did some-thing...
What is the matter?
Lord Ama-ne?
Lord Amane!

Do you remember me...?
What do you mean?
What of Aohiko, then?

Ao...?
And what of Toko ...?
Kai?
Katsu-ra?

You can't have forgotten.
Not the name of the girl you raised with such care...
To...o...
Say it aloud!
"Toko."

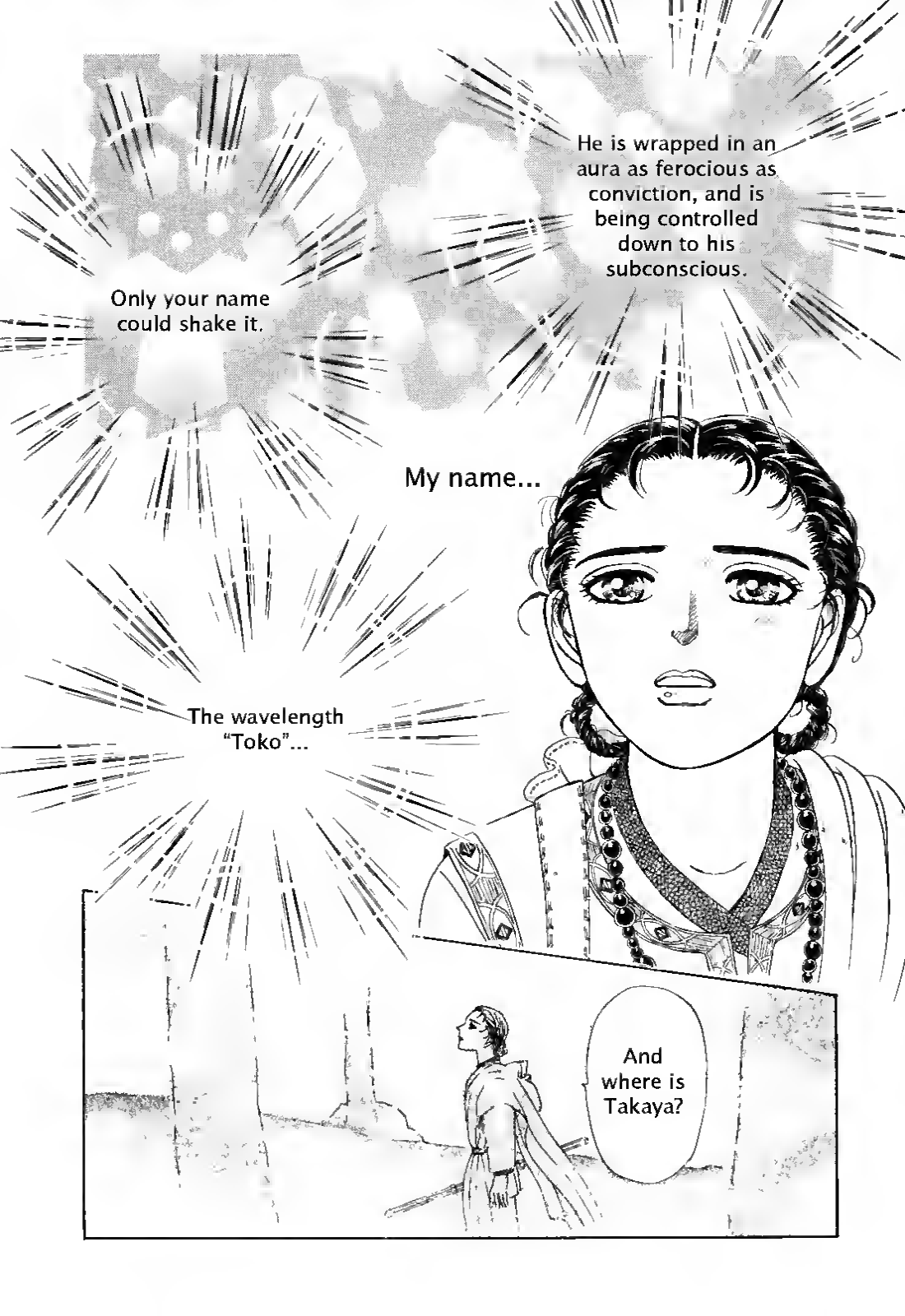

...o...
...To...
...
Ugkh!


SPLASH
Takaya...!?
Takaya!?

Lord Kusu-to!
What's happe-ned to Lord Takaya ...?
He fell into the ocean and was lost.
He hasn't yet fallen into Kiyu's hands.
This was my fault.
I never dreamed a demon god would entrust its divine name to Kiyu...
Wh... What of Lord Ama-ne?
She has withdrawn into her-self.

Wh... what...?
I'll join Kaguya and look for Takaya with her.
I'm going to the coast as well.
We must not...
...lose Takaya...

Yoko!
Kiyu...
A power so strong the word "suggestion" does not do it justice...
Takaya's memories are being sealed by a powerful suggestion.


He is wrapped in an aura as ferocious as conviction, and is being controlled down to his subconscious.
Only your name could shake it.
My name...
The wavelength "Toko"...
And where is Takaya?

Into the ocean...
He fell into the ocean. I pursued him immediately, but was blocked by a strange wavelength and lost sight of him.
It's as if he melted into the waves.

Takaya!
To be continued...

Itihasa 13

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